UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
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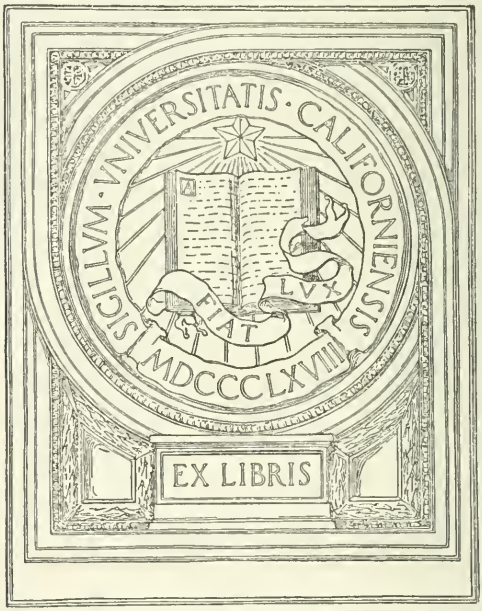

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Argyll Edition

THE WRITINGS OF

IAN HAY

VOLUME X

WE ARE AT LAST IN FRANCE (*Page* 79)

THE LAST MILLION

HOW THEY INVADED FRANCE —AND ENGLAND

BY

IAN HAY

BOSTON AND NEW YORK
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TO
THAT BORN FIGHTER
AND
MODERN CRUSADER
THE AMERICAN DOUGHBOY

PR
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1921
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A WORD TO THE DEDICATEE

[*Note: The following is the substance of a little "Welcome" which the author was requested to write to American soldiers and sailors visiting England for the first time during the fateful days of* 1918. *It was distributed upon the transports and in various American centres in England. Its purpose is to set forth some of our national peculiarities — and incidentally the author's Confession of Faith. It has no bearing upon the rest of the story, and may be skipped by the reader without compunction.*]

I. A Word of Explanation

I write this welcome to you American soldiers and sailors because I know America personally and therefore I know what the word "welcome" means. And I see right away from the start that it is going to be a difficult proposition for us over here to compete with America in that particular industry. However, we mean to try, and we hope to succeed. Anyway, we shall not fail from lack of good-will.

Having bid you welcome to our shores, I am next going to ask you to remember just one thing.

We are very, very short-handed at present. During the past four years the people of the British Isles have contributed to our common cause more than six million soldiers and sailors. On a basis of population, the purely British contribution to the forces of the British Empire should have been seventy-six per cent. The actual contribution has been eighty-four per cent; and when we come to casualties, not eighty-four but eighty-six per

cent of the total have been borne by those two little islands, Great Britain and Ireland, which form the cradle of our race. You can, therefore, imagine the strain upon our man-power. Every man up to the age of fifty is now liable to be drafted. The rest of our male population — roughly five millions — are engaged night and day in such occupations as shipbuilding, coal-mining, munition-making, and making two blades of corn grow where one grew before. They are assisted in every department, even in the war zone, by hundreds and thousands of devoted women.

So we ask you to remember that the England which you see is not England as she was, and as she hopes to be again. You see England in overalls; all her pretty clothes are put away for the duration. Some day we hope once again to travel in trains where there is room to sit down; in motor omnibuses and trolley cars for which you have not to wait in line. We hope again to see our streets brightly lit, our houses freshly painted, flower boxes glowing in every window, and fountains playing in Trafalgar Square. We hope to see the city once again crowded with traffic as thick as that on Fifth Avenue at Forty-second Street, and the uncanny silence of our present-day streets banished by the cheerful turmoil of automobiles and taxis. And above all we hope to see the air-raid shelters gone, and the hundreds of crippled men in hospital blue no longer visible in our streets, and the long lines of motor ambulances, which assemble every evening outside the stations to meet the hospital trains, swept away forever.

That is the old London — London as we would have you see it — London as we hope you will see it when you come back to us as holiday visitors. Meanwhile, we know you will make allowances for us.

Also, you may not find us very hilarious. In some ways we are strangely cheerful. For instance, you will see little mourning worn in public. That is because, if black were worn by all those who were entitled to wear it, you would see little else. Again, you will find our theatres packed night after night by a noisy, cheerful throng. But these are not idle people, nor are they the same people all the time. They are almost entirely hard-worked folks enjoying a few days' vacation. The majority of them are soldiers on leave from the Front. Few of them will be here next week; some of them will never see a play again. The play goes on and helps the audience to forget for a while, but it is a different audience every time.

And you will hear little talk about the War. We prefer to talk of almost anything else. Probably you will understand why. There is hardly a house in this country which has not by this time made a personal contribution to our cause. In each of these houses one of two trials is being endured — bereavement, the lesser evil, or suspense, the greater. We cannot, therefore, talk lightly of the War, and being determined not to talk anxiously about it, we compromise — we do not talk about it at all.

We want you to know this. To know is to understand.

II. First Impressions

Meanwhile, let us ask for your impressions of our country. It is only fair that we should be allowed to do this, for you know what happens to visitors in the United States when the reporters get their hooks into them.

So far as I have been able to gather, your impressions amount to something like this:

There is no ice-water, no ice-cream, no soda-fountains,

no pie. It is hard to get the old familiar eats in our restaurants.

Our cities are planned in such a way that it is impossible to get to any place without a map and compass.

Our traffic all keeps to the wrong side of the street.

Our public buildings are too low.

There are hardly any street-car lines in London.

Our railroad cars are like boxes, and our locomotives are the smallest things on earth.

Our weather is composed of samples.

Our coinage system is a practical joke.

Nobody, whether in street, train or tube, ever enters in conversation with you. If by any chance they do, they grouch all the time about the Government and the general management of the country.

Let us take the eats and drinks first. There is no ice-water. I admit it. I am sorry, but there it is. There never was much, but now that ammonia is mostly commandeered for munition work, there is less than ever. As a nation we do not miss it. In this country our difficulty is not to get cool, but to keep warm. Besides, it is possible that our moist climate, and the absence of steam-heat in our houses, saves us from that parched feeling which I have so often experienced in the United States. Anyway, that familiar figure of American domestic life, the iceman, is unknown to us. We drink our water at ordinary temperature — what you would call tepid — and we keep our meat in a stone cellar instead of the ice chest. As for ice-cream and soda-fountains, we have never given ourselves over to them very much. As a nation, we are hot-food eaters — that is, when we can get anything to eat! We are living on strict war rations here, just as you are beginning to do in the States. So you must forgive our apparent want of hospitality.

III. The Land We live in

Next, our cities. After your own straight, wide, methodically-numbered streets and avenues, London, Liverpool, Glasgow, and the rest must seem like a Chinese puzzle. I can only say in excuse that they have been there a very long time, and the people who started in to build them did not foresee that they would ever extend more than a few blocks. If Julius Cæsar had known that London was ultimately going to cover an area of seven hundred square miles, and house a population of seven and a half millions, I dare say he would have made a more methodical beginning. But Julius Cæsar never visited America, and the science of town-planning was unknown to him.

The narrow, winding streets of London are not suited to trolley-car lines. This fact has given us the unique London motor 'bus, driven with incredible skill, and gay with advertisements. There are not so many of these 'buses to-day as there might be, and such as there are are desperately full. But — *c'est la guerre!* Hundreds of our motor 'buses are over in France now. You will meet them when you get there, doing their bit — hurrying reënforcements to some hard-pressed point, or running from the back areas to the railhead, conveying happy, muddy Tommies home on leave.

And while we are discussing London, let me recommend you to make a point of getting acquainted with the London policeman. He is a truly great man. Watch him directing the traffic down in the City, or where Wellington Street, on its way to Waterloo Bridge, crosses the Strand. He has no semaphore, no whistle; but simply extends an arm, or turns his back, and the traffic swings to right or left, or stops altogether. For-

eign cities, even New York, are not ashamed to send their police to London to pick up hints on traffic control from the London "Bobby." Watch him handle an unruly crowd. He is unarmed, and though he carries a club, you seldom see it. If you get lost, ask him to direct you, for he carries a map of London inside his head. He is everybody's friend. By the way, if he wears a helmet he is one of the regular force. A flat cap is a sign of a "Special" — that is, a business man who is giving his spare time, by day or night, to take the place of those policemen who have joined the Colours. But, "Regular" or "Special," he is there to help you.

There are no skyscrapers in England. The fact is, London is no place for skyscrapers. It was New York which set the fashion. That was because Manhattan Island, with the Hudson on one side and the East River on the other, is physically incapable of expansion, and so New York, being unable to spread out, shot upwards. Moreover, New York is built on solid rock — you ask the Subway contractors about that! — while the original London was built on a marsh, and the marsh is there still. So it will not support structures like the Woolworth Building.

Most of our national highways start from London. There is one, a Roman road, called Watling Street, which starts from the Marble Arch and runs almost as straight as a rod from London to Chester, nearly two hundred miles; and it never changes its name after the first few miles, which are called the Edgware Road. Another, the Great North Road, runs from London to Edinburgh, and is four hundred miles long. One hundred years ago the mail coaches thundered along that road night and day, and highwaymen had their own particular pitches where no other highwaymen dreamed of but-

ting in. Five years ago that road was a running river of touring automobiles. Now, strings of grey military motor lorries rumble up and down its entire length. Perhaps you will ride on some of them.

London, easy-going London, has her short cuts, too. That is where she differs from the methodical, rectangular, convenient cities of the United States. She is full of cunning by-ways, and every street has a character of its own. The Strand was called "The Strand" a thousand years ago, because it *was* a strand — a strip of beach which ran alongside the Thames at the foot of a cliff (which has long since been smoothed and sloped out of existence) and was submerged each high tide. The English fought a great battle with Danish pirates near by, and to-day the dead Danes sleep their last sleep in St. Clement Danes' Church, right in the middle of the Strand.

Charing Cross, again, is the last of a great chain of such Crosses, stretching from London to Scotland, each a day's march from the next. They were set up at the end of the thirteenth century by King Edward the First of England, to commemorate the last journey of his beloved Queen — his *Chère Reine* — who died while accompanying him upon a campaign against the Scots. At each stopping-place on his homeward journey the King erected one of these crosses to mark the spot where the Queen's body lay that night. Many have perished, but you can still trace some of them along the Great North Road — Neville's Cross, Waltham Cross, and finally *Chère Reine* Cross, or Charing Cross. That strikes the imagination. So do Aldgate, Aldersgate, Moorgate, London Wall, and other streets which go back to the days when London really was a walled city.

But a walk around London repays itself. There is

Cleopatra's Needle on the Embankment — the veteran among all monuments of the world, except perhaps its sister in Central Park, New York. It was in existence fifteen hundred years before Christ, in the city of Heliopolis. It looked down upon the Palace and Court of Queen Cleopatra in Alexandria. After that it lay prostrate in the sands of the Egyptian desert for another fifteen hundred years. It was finally presented to the British Government by the Khedive of Egypt. It was towed to England on a raft, and was nearly lost during a storm in the Bay of Biscay. Recently, the Zeppelins have tried dropping bombs on it, as you can see for yourself. But a mere bomb or two is nothing to a veteran with a constitution like that.

In Warwickshire, around Stratford and the Forest of Arden, you will find yourself in Shakespeare's country. At Gerrard's Cross William Penn is buried. In the old days a watch was kept on the grave, as certain patriotic Americans considered that the proper place for William Penn to be buried was Pennsylvania, and tried to give practical effect to this pious opinion.

Scotland, if you happen to find yourself there, is entirely different from England. England is flat or undulating, and except in the manufacturing districts, is given up mainly to cornfields and pasture land. Scotland, especially in the north, is cut up into hills and glens. Not such hills as you possess in Colorado, or Nevada, or the Northwest. There is no Pike's Peak, no Shasta, no Rainier. The highest mountain in the British Isles — Ben Nevis — is only a little over four thousand feet high, but naturally Scotsmen think a good deal of it.

Scotland is a great battle-ground. The Scot has always been fighting some one. There was perpetual warfare upon the border from the earliest days. The Romans,

who were business men, built a wall right across England from Newcastle to Carlisle, to keep the Scots out. They failed, as you will find out for yourself, when you study a list of British Cabinet Ministers; but you can see parts of the wall still. Later, there were everlasting border raids, from one side or the other, maintained as a tradition by the great families of that region — the Percys, the Douglases, the Maxwells, the Elliotts. Besides this, various English kings tried to conquer Scotland. Sometimes one side would win a battle, sometimes the other, but no victory was lasting. At last, in 1707, the Act of Union was passed, and Scotland and England came under one central Government. Unfortunately, the Highlanders of the north were not consulted in the arrangement, and they put up two rebellions of their own. Prince Charles Edward, the last of the Stuarts, actually invaded England, and got as far as Derby. He was defeated, but the rebellion smouldered on for years among the Highland glens. The chain of forts along the Caledonian Canal to-day — Fort George, Fort Augustus, Fort William, now peaceful holiday resorts — is a reminder of that time. But those days are all over now, and for nearly two centuries English and Scottish soldiers have fought side by side all over the world. Ireland was united to England and Scotland by a similar Act of Union in 1800. This event, as you may possibly have heard, has provided a fruitful topic of conversation ever since.

IV. Our Climate

Then there is our weather. An Englishman never knows on going to work in the morning whether to take a palm-leaf hat, or a fur overcoat, or a diving-suit. The trouble is that our weather arrives too suddenly. We

are an island in the middle of the ocean, and most of our weather comes in from the Atlantic, where there is no one to watch it. Our weather prophets simply have to take a chance. That is all. With you it is different. Your weather travels across a continent three thousand miles wide. You can see it coming, and telegraph to the next State what to expect.

So, if you are spending a day's leave in London, and walk out of blazing sunshine at one end of the street into a thunderstorm at the other — well, have a heart, and put it down to the War. We will try to fix things for you when peace comes. But we cannot promise. Anyway, in peace-time we can always wear rubbers.

That is all about British weather.

V. Our Transportation

Then there are our railroads. These, like our boxed-in passenger coaches and little four-wheel freight cars, tickle you to death, I know. The compartment system is a national symptom. An Englishman loves one thing above all others, and that is to get a railway compartment to himself. Nobody knows why, but he does. Probably the craving arises from his inability to converse easily with strangers. That inability is passing away. I shall speak of it later. But the three-class system is a relic of antiquity. Fifty years ago there were three grades of comfort in British railroad travelling. You could have your family horse-coach lashed upon an open railroad truck and attached to the train. You thus travelled in your own carriage, or chaise. I do not know what happened to the horses. This was the usual custom of the grand folk of those days. Or you could travel by ordinary railway coaches, without cushions or windows. Or you could pack yourself into an open freight truck,

much as soldiers on the Western Front are packed to-day, and so reach your destination with other merchandise.

That has all gone now. Practically the only difference between first, second, and third class in these days is a difference of price — which means elbow-room. (Second class, by the way, has almost entirely died out.) The three classes are almost equal in comfort, especially just now, when the War has abolished nearly all dining-cars and sleepers. Our sleeping-car system never amounted to much, anyway. The journeys were too short to make it necessary for such as were travelling by night (and they were comparatively few) to go to bed. The lordly Pullman car is almost unknown here.

I said just now that we used to be proud of our railroads in time of peace. We are doubly proud of them to-day in the stress of War. They passed automatically into Government hands the day the War broke out, and they have given our whole country a lesson in the art of carrying on. Thousands of their employees are away in the trenches; hundreds of their locomotives and freight cars are in France or Mesopotamia or Palestine, enlisted for the duration. You will notice them when you get over, marked R.O.D. (Railway Operating Department). They have all come from England. Miles of tracks here have been torn up and conveyed bodily overseas. There is little labour available to execute repairs, and none to build new stock. There is a shortage of coal, a shortage of oil, and no paint. Passenger services have been cut down by a half, and fares raised fifty per cent; yet the traffic is still enormous, and the strain on the depleted staffs is immense. But they manage somehow. Men who have long earned their retirement remain in service, while boys and women do the rest. Carry on!

VI. Our Gopher Runs

Then comes our substitute for your Subway, and street-car system generally. In London you will notice that there are two kinds of Subway — the so-called Underground, or shallow transit, and the deep Tubes. The system is so complicated, owing to the shape of London, that it has been found impossible to have a one-price ticket such as prevails everywhere in the United States.

The Underground is the oldest underground railroad in the world. You probably gathered that for yourself the first time you saw it. Twenty-five years ago its trains were drawn by ordinary steam locomotives, which were supposed to consume their own smoke. Perhaps they did, but it must have leaked out again somewhere.

The old Underground Railway of London got nearer to the ordinary conception of hell than anything yet invented. Stations and trains were lit by feeble gas or oil lamps; all glass was covered over with a film of soot, and the brightest illumination was provided by the glow of the locomotive furnaces as the train rumbled asthmatically into a station. The atmosphere was a mixture of soot, smoke, sulphur, and poison gas. The trains were on the box-compartment system, and small compartments at that. The train usually waited two or three minutes in each station (instead of ten seconds as now), and it required a full hour to travel from King's Cross to Charing Cross. It was impossible to see to read a newspaper, so that passengers, to pass the time, used to rob, assault, and occasionally murder one another. With the coming of electric traction the old Underground was cleaned up and refurnished. At the same time, the Tubes were constructed away down in the

London clay, where there could be no interference from oozy gravel, or gas mains, or sewers.

The chief trouble about the Tubes is that no one knows where they are. Of course, every one knows where the *stations* are. For instance, every Londoner knows where Piccadilly Circus Station is — the surface station. But where is the actual subterranean station? Or rather, where are the two stations, because at this point two roads cross, and each has its own subterranean station. Ah! They certainly are not where simple folk, like you and me, would expect them to be — under Piccadilly Circus. If they were, you would find them at the foot of the elevator. But that would be too easy. It would make Londoners fat and lazy, leading the sedentary life they do, to step straight into the train. So they have to walk about a mile. Where to, no one knows. But there is a school of philosophers which believes that a good many of the Tube stations have no subterranean stations at all. One subterranean is shared jointly by several surface stations. A short circular train ride is provided, just to furnish the necessary illusion, and the passenger, having really walked to his destination, steps out of the train well satisfied, and goes up the right elevator under the impression that he has been carried there. That is our Tube system as far as modern research has been able to fathom it. Of course, an Englishman could never have thought out such a good practical joke as these Tubes. The entire system was projected and constructed by an American.

VII. Our National Joke

But we have a sense of humour all the same. Our money system, like our joint system of weights and measures, is, as you very properly observe, a practical

joke. It dates back to the time when an Englishman bought his Sunday dinner with a pound of rock. It is bound to go soon, and make way for the decimal system, just as inches and feet and yards are already making way in this country for metres and centimetres. Meanwhile we have got to put up with it.

The main points for an American to remember are — firstly, that a shilling over here, despite war scarcity, will still buy rather more than a quarter will buy in New York; and secondly, the necessity of keeping clearly in mind the difference between a half-crown and a two-shilling piece. Even taxi-drivers do not always know the difference. If you give them half a crown they will frequently hand you change for a two-shilling piece.

VIII. Ourselves

Lastly, ourselves. This chapter is going to be the most difficult.

Last year I met an American soldier in London. He was one of the first who had come over. I asked his impressions. He said:

"I have been in London three days, and not a soul has spoken to me."

And therein was summed up the fundamental difference between our two nations. In the United States people like to see one another and talk to one another, and meet fresh people. If a stranger comes to town, reporters interview him as he steps off the train. Americans prefer when travelling to do so in open cars. At home their living-room doors are usually left open. Every room stands open to every other. In their clubs and hotels there are few private rooms. In their business houses the head of the firm, the staff, and the clerks,

frequently work together in one great hall. If any partitions exist they are only table-high or they are made of glass. Plenty of light, plenty of air, plenty of publicity. That is America.

Now over here, somehow, we are different. I said before that an Englishman's ambition in life was to get a compartment to himself. That principle, for good or ill prevails through all our habits. On the railroad we travel in separate boxes. At home all our rooms have doors, and we keep them shut. (This by the way, is chiefly in order to get warm, for there is no central heating.) In most of our clubs there are rooms where no one is allowed to speak. They are crowded with Englishmen. Only a few years ago one never thought of dining in a restaurant except when travelling. If he did, he always asked for a private room. If you dine at Simpson's in the Strand to-day you will still see a relic of the custom in the curious boxed-in compartments which enclose some of the tables. In our business houses the head of the department is concealed in one hutch, the partners in another. The chief clerk has one too. The other clerks may have to work in one room; but each clerk cherishes just one ambition, and that is to rise high enough in the business to secure honourable confinement in a hutch of his own.

For the same reason every Englishman keeps a fence round his garden — be it castle or cottage garden — just to show that it is his garden and no one else's. And if you look into any old English parish church you will see the same thing. Every family has its own pew; the humblest pew has a door, and when the family gets inside the pew it shuts the door. Some of the pews have curtains around them as well. The occupant can see the minister, and the minister can see him. The rest of the

congregation are as invisible to him as he is to them. No one in the congregation resents this at all. They are rather proud of the custom. It represents to them only what is right and proper, the principle of a compartment to one's self.

And so a nation which has lived for centuries upon this plan is not a nation which enters readily or easily into conversation outside its own particular compartment. But how was I to explain or excuse such a state of mind to my American soldier friend? Let me say right here that this constrained behaviour does not arise from churlishness, or want of good-will. Even the Germans admit that. A German philosopher once said, with considerable truth for a German: "The Englishman is a cold friend, but a good neighbour. He may shut himself up with his property, but he will never dream of invading yours." This statement is only partially correct. The Englishman is one of the warmest-hearted and most hospitable of men. But he is a bad starter — a bad starter in War, Love, Business, and, above all, Conversation. Once get him started, and he refuses to leave off. But you must start him first. And you are doing it.

The Englishman's passion for his own compartment goes back a very, very long way, right into the centuries. It goes back to the days when we lived in tribes and every tribe kept to itself, and an Englishman's house was his castle — especially if the house were a one-room mud hut. That makes us what we are to this day. Also we are cooped up in a small island, and most of us have never left it. No Englishman ever speaks to another Englishman if he can help it. This is partly the old tribal instinct, partly laziness, and partly fear of a rebuff. Also, it may involve explanations, and an Englishman would rather be scalped than explain. So he saves trouble

all round by burying himself in a newspaper and saying nothing.

That by the way. But the main object of this little book is to make you welcome to England, whoever you may be, and to show you why it is that in our inarticulate and undemonstrative English way, we love our small country just as you love your big continent.

"This fortress built by Nature by herself
Against infection and the hand of war;
This happy breed of men, this little world;
This precious stone set in a silver sea;
This blessed plot, this earth, this realm, this England."

That is how William Shakespeare felt about this "right little tight little island" three hundred years ago, in days when our nation was fighting for its life, neither for the first nor for the last time, against overwhelmingly superior forces. And we hope that when you go back safe and victorious, as we pray God you may, to your own beautiful land, you will carry with you a little of that same feeling, and a real understanding of the passionate sentiment that lies beneath it.

So we bid you welcome. And we ask you, our honoured guests, to do all you can to get into close touch with the habits and point of view of our country, both here and upon that battle-front whither you are bound, to play your own splendid part in the Great Game.

We are never going back to the old days when Englishmen, Scotsmen, Irishmen, Canadians, Australians, and Americans sat each in their own compartment, and thanked God that they had it to themselves. We English-speaking races have got together over this War. We have lost terribly, but we are gaining much. We are rubbing shoulders in London, and Paris, and countless other

places, and we are rubbing the knobs and the angles off one another, good and plenty. It is not always easy or comfortable to have knobs rubbed off you, and the process sometimes involves a little friction; but we must be prepared for that.

For instance, we all speak English, but we all pronounce it in different ways. Well, why not? Hitherto we have been inclined to assume that the other man was talking like that to annoy us. That is one of the knobs that has to be rubbed off — intolerance of trivial matters of taste and habit. To-day, under the most searching test in the world — the test of comradeship in the face of battle and sudden death — we are acquiring a profound respect for one another. When we have acquired just one other thing — tolerance for one another's point of view — we shall have laid the foundation of an understanding which is going to hold us all up through some difficult times hereafter. Getting this old world back on to a peace basis, after the Kaiser has been put where he belongs, is going to call for all our courage, sincerity, and loyalty to our common ideals. When that period of Reconstruction comes — and it may come sooner than we think — the first plank in its platform must be a solid understanding between the two English-speaking races. They, at least, must speak with one voice, or the whole fabric will fall to the ground.

Our two nations can never hope entirely to understand one another. Neither can they expect always to see eye to eye. Their national personalities are too robust. But to-day their sons are learning to know the worst of one another and the best of one another and the invincible humanity of one another. With that knowledge will come — if we have the will — tolerance of one another's point of view. We must get that. There

are thousands of reasons why, but to you, soldiers and sailors, I am only going to mention one.

When the Victory comes, we shall enjoy its rewards. But all the while we shall be conscious that we have not won these entirely by ourselves. We shall in great measure have inherited them from men who have not lived to enjoy the fruits of their own sacrifice — men whom we have left behind, in France, Belgium, and Italy; in Asia and Africa; whose bones cover the ocean floor — men who gave everything that the Cause might live. To these we shall desire to raise a lasting memorial. We can best do that by building up a fabric of understanding on the foundation which they laid, so truly, with their own lives. If we do that — and only if we do that — our Dead can sleep in peace; for they will know that what they died for was worth while, and above all that we, their heritors, *have kept faith with them* —

"... Famous men
From whose bays we borrow —
They that put aside To-day,
All the joys of their To-day,
And with toil of their To-day
Bought for us To-morrow."

IAN HAY

London, July, 1918

AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION

THIS is the most difficult book I ever had to write. Here are two of the main difficulties.

First, a war story must be historically accurate, or it is worthless. Now, no campaign, however glorious and successful in the end, was ever conducted without ups and downs; and naturally, no army cares to have its ups and downs recorded with any degree of historic accuracy by a foreigner. On the other hand, undiscriminating adulation merely disgusts the judicious reader.

Second, I was attempting a feat never yet successfully encompassed by an inhabitant of the British Isles — namely, the writing of a book in the American language.

However, I wrote the book because I wanted my own people to know what the American soldier endured and achieved in this War, and because I wanted my American readers to know that I had made such an effort. I have received so much kindness throughout the length and breadth of this great land that in the following pages I have taken the liberty of regarding myself as a member of the family. I have tried to write this book as I wrote THE FIRST HUNDRED THOUSAND. I have endeavoured to describe its good-fellowship, its youthful struggles, its impressions of its Allies, and its fighting experiences from the point of view and in the

vernacular of that unsophisticated but loveable person — as unsophisticated and loveable as the "Kitchener" recruit — the American Doughboy. Perhaps it was an impossible task. But it was a task worth trying. And — like that single undistinguished member of a brilliant family, who, so the story runs, were all buried under one tombstone graven deep with the glowing record of their achievements, I shall be content if my readers will endorse the epitaph which occupied *his* modest allotment of space at the foot of the column:

HE DONE WHAT HE COULD.

That is what we have all been doing during the past difficult years.

IAN HAY

THE LAST MILLION

The Last Million

CHAPTER ONE

THE ARGONAUTS

A SHIP is sailing on the sea — a tall ship, with several masts and an imposing array of smokestacks. She is moving at a strictly processional pace, with a certain air of professional boredom. In fact, the disconsolate hissing of her steam escape-pipes intimates quite plainly that she is accustomed to a livelier life than this. But a convoy belongs to the straitest sect of Labour-Unionism: its pace is regulated to that of the slowest performer; so ocean greyhounds in such company must restrain themselves as best they may.

All around her steam other ships. They are striped, spotted, and ringstraked as to their hulls, smokestacks, and spars in a manner highly gratifying to that school of unappreciated geniuses, the Futurists, — or Cubists, or Vorticists, or whatever the malady is called, — but exasperating to the submerged Hun, endeavouring to calculate knottage and obtain ranging-points through a perplexed periscope. On the outer fringe of the flotilla fuss the sheep-dogs — the escorting warships.

If you seek to ascertain the nationality of our tall ship, by internal evidence, you will probably begin by observing certain notices painted up

about the decks and cabins, requesting you to keep off the bridge, or to refrain from throwing cigar-ends on the deck, or not to leave this tap running. You will next observe that these notices are inscribed in English, French, and another language. What language, it is impossible to say, for some one has pasted a strip of blank paper over the inscription in every case. But it is easy to guess. In the depths, here and there, German is still spoken; but upon the face of the broad ocean it is a dead language.

Talking of nationalities, you will further observe that these ships all fly the Union Jack. But they are crowded with American soldiers. There must be thousands of these soldiers. They swarm everywhere — bunched on deck, peering through portholes, or plastering the rigging like an overflow of mustard sauce, which in truth they are. They are more than that. They are a portent. They are a symbol. They are a testimonial — to the Kaiser; for has not that indefatigable bungler by his own efforts brought about a long-overdue understanding between all the English-speaking people in the world?

Above all, they are a direct answer to a particular challenge.

A few weeks ago the Men at the Top in Germany got together and held what is known in military circles as a pow-wow. A condensed report of their deliberations would have read something like this:

"Yes, Majesty, the Good Old German God is un-

doubtedly on the side of our Army. Still, the fact remains that we have not yet achieved anything, after three-and-a-half years of war, really worth while. . . . *Belgium, Serbia, Roumania, Russia?* Yes, no doubt. Each of those countries has now received the true reward of her stupidity and presumption; but none of them ever offered any serious difficulty from a military point of view, except Russia; and the credit for her collapse was due far more to our internal agents than to our external military pressure. . . . No, Hindenburg, I have n't forgotten Tannenberg; but you have n't done very much *since* then (except get gold nails knocked into yourself), and what you have accomplished has been chiefly under — ahem! — *my* direction. . . . No, no, I am not really pinning orchids on myself — not yet, anyway. I am merely trying to be candid and frank: in short, I am reminding you that you are only a figurehead. You know what irreverent people call you — 'General What-do-you-Say!'

". . . Yes, Your Imperial Highness, your consummate generalship at Verdun undoubtedly achieved an historic victory over the French; but you will forgive me for pointing out that your casualties were at least twice as numerous as theirs, and that the ground which you captured has since been regained. . . . *Submarines?* My good Von Capelle, your submarines are as obsolete as our late lamented friend Von Tirpitz. *Justify my statement?* In a moment. . . . Yes, Majesty, the British Army failed utterly to break our line at the

Somme, but they and the French took seventy thousand of our best troops prisoner, and we had to execute a 'strategic' retirement which lost us about a thousand square miles of French soil. Not much of a performance for the German Army — the *German Army* — to put up against a mob of half-trained mercenaries! We managed to delude our people into the belief that we had scored a great military triumph in so doing, but the German nation, excellent though their discipline is, are not likely to go on swallowing that stuff forever. *You* know that, better than most, Hertling! Bethmann-Hollweg knew it too: he was no match for Liebknecht, although he did lock him up. . . .

"And what of the situation since the Somme? Haig is within ten miles of Ostend, and has captured practically the whole of the Paschendaele Ridge. . . . *The Eastern Front?* Nothing matters in this war except the *Western* Front. What are we going to do about that? . . . *Your Majesty will assume supreme command?* Splendid! . . . *And break the Western Front?* Colossal! That was just what I was about to suggest. Now for the plan of campaign, which I do not doubt Your Majesty has already sketched out. . . . Perhaps Your Majesty will permit Hindenburg and myself to remain here a few moments longer, while you unfold it? We need not detain His Imperial Highness the Crown Prince. He is the man of Action: his task will come later. (*For Heaven's sake, Von Hertling, get him out of here, or our two military geniuses will be at loggerheads in five minutes!*) ". . . And now,

Majesty, you suggest — ? . . . That is a superb plan; but it appears to me — I mean, to Hindenburg — that you — we — are rating one of the nations opposed to us too lightly. . . . Yes, Your Majesty, I know you are going to stand no nonsense from them *after* the War, — in fact, you warned their Ambassador, most properly, if I may say so, to that effect, — but would it not be a good move, just as a preliminary, to stand no nonsense from them *during* the War? . . . *Too far away? They can't get over?* Well — here are the approximate numbers of the American troops already in France. And there are a lot of them in England too. . . . *Rather surprising?* Yes. Indeed, quite a creditable feat for an unwarlike nation. I shall show these figures to Von Capelle: it will justify what I said about his submarines: in fact, it will annoy him extremely. And there are more coming. They are pouring over faster and faster. I shall tell him that too. . . . *But the Americans have had no experience of intensive warfare? And they have fallen behind with their constructive programme — aeroplanes and artillery?* Quite so. And, therefore, taking these facts into consideration, I — Hindenburg — Your Majesty will doubtless decide that our only chance is to concentrate in overwhelming strength, here and now, against *one* of the two enemy forces at present opposed to us, and destroy that force in detail before the Americans can throw any considerable body of troops into the line. . . . *Expensive?* Undoubtedly. . . . *No one has ever succeeded during this War in breaking a properly organized trench-*

line? Agreed; but only because no one has yet been able or willing to pay the necessary price. The British might have done it on the Somme, but Haig was too squeamish about the lives of his men. British generals are handicapped in their military dispositions by a public opinion which happily does not exist in our enlightened Fatherland. I — Hin — Your Majesty can afford to do it. With all these unemployed Divisions from the Russian Front, we can go to the limit in the matter of casualties. . . . *How many?* Well, I think we can afford to lose a million men — say a million . . . Yes, indeed, Majesty, your heart must bleed at the prospect; but after all, it is for the ultimate good of Humanity. . . . *'One cannot make omelettes without breaking eggs?'* Admirable! Your Majesty's felicity of phrase shows no falling off, I perceive. And yet the Americans talk of their Woodrow Wilson! Besides, it will be a million less to make trouble for Us after the War. Now, I suppose we are all agreed on the foe to be crushed? . . . *The British?* Naturally. The British! The time has come to drive them into the sea. Haig has recently extended his line twenty-eight miles — rather reluctantly, too. He has had to send troops to Italy, and he had heavy casualties in Belgium last autumn. Twenty-seven thousand killed, in fact. Still, without a supreme commander, you cannot blame the various Allied leaders for 'passing the buck' to one another, as the Yankees say. We can accumulate troops on his front — veterans from Russia — sufficient to outnumber him by at least three to one.

That should suffice, if we stand by our decision about casualties. We will strike hard at his new positions, before his artillery has had time to register thoroughly. We will annihilate his front system of trenches by an intensive bombardment, while our new long-range gas-shells take his rest-billets by surprise and demoralize his Divisional and Corps Reserves. And I think, Majesty, that we have been a little punctilious about things like the Red Cross. After all, hospitals are a mere sentimental handicap to the efficient waging of war. Our new bombing aeroplanes might be instructed to deal faithfully with these, especially as the fool English have organized no preparation for their defence. Yes, I — we — Your Majesty will drive the whole pack of them into the sea this time! The French, isolated, can then be handled at leisure; and with Calais, Boulogne, and Havre in our hands the Americans will find that they have come too late. In fact, we can pick them off as they arrive. Thus it is that Your Majesty, like Cæsar and Napoleon, separates his enemies and then destroys them one by one. . . . *Divide et Impera!* Exactly! Most happily put, Your Majesty!"

And it was so — up to a point. Ludendorff's plan was adopted. The necessary concentration of troops was effected with admirable secrecy and promptitude, and the parallel enterprises of sweeping the British Army into the sea and expending a million German lives were duly inaugurated. The latter undertaking succeeded better than the

former: the line sagged and wavered; it was pushed here and there; but it never broke. Still, the strain was terrible, as news arrived of Monchy gone, Wytschaete gone, Messines gone, Kemmel gone; of Bapaume, Albert, Armentières, Bailleul, all gone — little hills and little towns all of them, but big and precious in certain unimportant eyes because of their associations. But the worst news never arrived. Instead, there came one morning the tale of an all-day assault by the Hun, delivered in mass from Meteren to Voormezeele, every wave of which had been broken and hurled back by impregnable rocks of French and British infantry. So disastrous was the failure of that tremendous lunge that the enemy drew off with his dead and his shame for several weeks, and the non-stop run to Calais was withdrawn from the time-table until further notice.

But the matter could not be left here. The Boche had laid a terrible stake on the table, and was bound to redeem it or perish. Plainly he would try again — maybe at some fresh point; but again. Already there were mutterings of trouble on the French Front. That he would break the line — the line which he had failed to break at Verdun in 1916, and at Ypres in 1914 — seemed incredible; but he might succeed in straining it beyond the limits of perfect recovery; and if that happened, Ludendorff's boast that America would arrive too late might be justified.

Hence the present Armada. It is only one of many. Transports have been crossing the Atlantic for months now, but never upon such a scale as

this. There are thousands of soldiers in this convoy alone — men physically splendid, with nearly a year's training behind them. They are going over — Over There — in answer to the call. Russia has stepped out of the scale, so America must step in at once if Prussianism is to kick the beam. Here they are — a sight to quicken the pulse — the New World hastening to redress the balance of the Old.

CHAPTER TWO

SHIP'S COMPANY

However, we have not reached our destination yet; which is just as well, for at present we are fully occupied in assimilating our new surroundings. To tell the truth, some of us have a good deal to assimilate. There is young Boone Cruttenden, for instance.

Little more than a year ago he was preparing to settle down in his ancestral home in Kentucky, there to prop the declining years of an octogenarian parent, Colonel Harvey Cruttenden, known in far-back Confederate days as one of General Sam Wheeler's hardest-riding disciples. But President Wilson had upset the plans of Boone Cruttenden for all time, by inviting him and certain others to step forward and help make the World Safe for Democracy. Boone was one of the first to accept the invitation.

Several strenuous months at a training-camp of the Reserve Officers' Training Corps followed, and in due course he found himself, with a gilded metal strip on either shoulder, communicating his slender knowledge of the art of war to drafted persons who possessed no knowledge of the subject at all — just as thousands of other young men of the right spirit were doing all over the country, and just as thousands of other young men of similar spirit had been

doing for more than three years in another country three thousand miles away.

"It was something fierce at first," he confided to Miss Frances Lane, a United States Army nurse, proceeding, in company with ninety-nine others, to a Base Hospital in France.

By rights Miss Lane and her companions should not have been taking chances on a transport at all. She should have been crossing the Atlantic in a stately white-painted hospital ship, with the Red Cross emblazoned on its sides, immune by all the laws of God and Man from hostile attack. But the Red Cross makes the Hun see red. Therefore it is found safer in these days to adjust life-jackets over the splints and bandages of wounded men and send them across the water, together with the indomitable sisterhood which tends them, protected by something that makes a more intelligible appeal to *Kultur* than the mere symbol of Christianity.

"It was something fierce," repeated Boone Cruttenden.

"Tell me!" commanded Miss Lane, with an air of authority which Boone found extremely attractive.

"Well, in the training-camps the main proposition was to make the boys understand what they were there for. They were full of enthusiasm, but very few of them had taken any interest in the early part of the war, and we were all a long way from Europe, anyhow. They were willing enough to fight, but naturally they wanted to know what they were fighting for. Even when we told them, they were n't too wise. Two or three men of my

company could neither read nor write; another man knew the name of his home town, but not the name of his State. The map of Europe was nothing in his young life. Then, lots of them thought we were going to fight the Yankees again, and whip them this time!"

Boone's eyes flashed, and for a moment he forgot all about European complications. He was his father's son all through. But a certain tensity in the atmosphere recalled him to realities.

"I guess you are n't a Southerner?" he observed apologetically.

"Massachusetts," replied Miss Lane coldly.

Boone Cruttenden offered a laboured expression of regret, and proceeded:

"Then they did n't like saluting, or obeying orders on the jump. Neither did I, for that matter. It seemed undemocratic."

"So it is," affirmed Miss Lane sturdily.

"Well, I don't know. We certainly made much quicker progress with our training once we had gotten the idea. Our instructors were very particular about it, too — both French and British. There was an English sergeant — well, the boys used to come running a hundred yards to see him salute an officer. I tell you, it tickled them to death, at first. Next thing, they were all trying to do it too."

"What was it like?"

Boone rose from his seat upon the deck, stiffened his young muscles, and offered a very creditable reproduction of the epileptic salute of the British Guardsman.

"Like that," he said.

"I'm not surprised they ran," commented Miss Lane.

"Still," continued Boone appreciatively, "that sergeant was a bird. At the start, we regarded him as a pure vaudeville act. He talked just like a stage Englishman, for one thing. For another, a German bullet had gone right through his face — in at one cheek and out at the other — and that did n't help make a William Jennings Bryan of him. But William J. had nothing on him; neither had Will Rogers, for that matter. He would stand there in front of us and put over a line of stuff that made everybody weak with laughing — everybody, that is, except the fellow he was talking to. I shall never forget the first morning we held an Officers' Instruction Class. There were about forty of us. Old man Duckett — that was his name; Sergeant Instructor Duckett — marched us around, and put us through our paces. We meant to show him something — we were a chesty bunch in those days — so we gave him what we imagined was a first-class West Point show. (Not that any of us had been at West Point.) When we had done enough, he lined us up, and said: 'Well, gentlemen, I have run over your points, and before dismissin' the parade I should like to say that I only wish the President of the United States was here to see you. If he *did* catch sight of you, I know that his first words would be — " Thank Gawd, from the bottom of my heart, we've got a Navy!"'"

To Boone and Miss Lane now enter others.

(This is a trial to which Master Boone is growing accustomed, for Miss Lane is quite the prettiest girl on the ship.) Among them we note one Jim Nichols, who, previous to America's entry into the War, has worked upon the New Orleans Cotton Exchange "ever since he can remember." There is also Major Powers, wearing the ribbon of the Spanish War medal. There are two Naval officers, crossing over to pursue submarines. Until they begin, Miss Lane makes a very pleasant substitute. And there is a British officer who walks with a limp — Captain Norton — returning from a spell of duty as Military Instructor in a Texas training-camp.

Miss Lane, with the instinct of a true hostess, turns to the stranger.

"We were talking about our rookies, Captain," she announces. "How did they compare with your Kitchener's Army?"

"Very much the same, Miss Lane, in the early days. Fish out of the water, all of them. We had all sorts — miners, shipbuilders, farm-hands, railwaymen, newspaper-boys — and not one of them knew the smallest thing about soldiering. They knew pretty well everything else, I admit. The ranks were chock-full of experts — engineers, plumbers, electricians, glass-blowers, printers, musicians. I remember one of my men put himself down as an 'egg-tester' — whatever that may be! An actor, perhaps. But hardly one of them knew his right foot from his left when it came to forming fours."

"Same here," said Major Powers. "My first consignment of drafted men was a mixture of moun-

taineers from Tennessee — moonshiners, most of them — and East-Side Jews from New York. (I wonder who the blue-eyed boy at Washington was who mixed 'em!) The moonshiners looked the hardest lot of cases you ever set eyes on: they hated discipline worse than poison; and an officer was about as popular with them as a skunk at a picnic. But they were as easy as pie: they were scared to death half the time, by — what do you think?"

"The water-wagon?" suggested a voice.

"No — of getting lost! They could have found their way blindfold over their own hills back home; but they had never lived on a street before, and those huge camps had them paralyzed. They said the huts were all exactly alike — which was true enough — and not one of them would stray fifty yards from his own for fear he would not find it again. Curious, is n't it?"

"Yes. Almost exactly what happened with our Scottish Highlanders," said Norton. "But they took quite kindly to city life in the end. Regular clubmen, in fact. What about your East-Siders?"

"They were a more difficult proposition," said Powers. "In the first place, they did n't want to fight at all, whereas the moonshiners did. In fact, the moonshiners did n't care whom they fought, so long as they fought somebody. They were like the Irishman who asked: 'Is this a private fight, or can anybody join in?' But the East-Siders were different. Their discipline was right enough: in fact, the average East-Side rookie usually acted towards an officer as if he wanted to sell *him* something. But

they were city birds, born and bred. They were accustomed to behave well when a cop was in sight; but once around the corner you could not have trusted them with their own salary. They did n't like country life, and they did n't like the dark. They were never really happy away from a street with illuminated signs on it — and there are n't many of those in Texas. If you put one of the bunch on sentry duty by himself in a lonely place, like as not he'd get so scared he'd go skating around the outskirts of the camp looking for cover. I once rounded up four of my sentries from different posts, all together in one pool-room. But discipline has them nicely fixed now. By the way, you heard the story of the Jew doughboy whose friends recommended him to take a Commission?"

"No. Tell me!" commanded Miss Lane.

"He refused, on the ground that it would be too difficult to collect. He said he might not be able to keep tally of all the Germans he killed: besides, his General might not believe him. Anyway, he preferred a straight salary! Tell us some more of your experiences, Captain."

"They were much the same as yours," said Norton. "The trouble with Kitchener's Army was that practically every member of the rank-and-file enlisted under the firm belief that Kitchener would simply hand him a rifle and ammunition and pack him off right away to the Front — whatever that might be — to shoot the Kaiser. Their experiences during the first six months — chiefly a course of instruction in obedience and sobriety — was a bit

of a jolt to them. But discipline told in the end. To-day I believe most of them would rather have a strict officer than an officer they could do what they liked with. Leniency usually means inefficiency; and inefficiency at the top of things usually means irregular meals and regular casualties for the men underneath!"

"What do you include under discipline, Captain?" enquired that upholder of personal liberty, Miss Lane, suspiciously.

"Little things, chiefly — things that don't seem to matter much. Shaving, and tidiness —"

"What, in a trench?" asked several young officers. But Major Powers nodded his head approvingly.

"That is just what most of us ask who don't know," he said. "But I have seen enough service to have learned one thing, and that is that a dirty soldier is a bad soldier, all the world over. If a man is encouraged to neglect his personal appearance, he starts to neglect his work — gets careless with the cleaning of his rifle, and so forth. If a man takes no pride in his appearance, he takes no pride in his duty. The other way round, the best soldier is the soldier who keeps himself smart."

"That is just what I think," interpolated Miss Lane, virtuously. (She had succeeded during the Major's homily in surreptitiously powdering her nose, and felt ready to take Florence Nightingale's place at a moment's notice.)

"We certainly found it so," said Norton. "In fact, after a short experience of trench warfare we

revived all the old peace-time stunts. The order was given that every man in the trenches was to be shaved by a certain hour each day. (Of course, if the Boche attacked in mass, the ceremony was liable to postponement.) In billets behind the line every one was expected to make himself as smart as possible — brush his uniform, shine his shoes, and so on. The band played for an hour every evening. Saluting and other little ceremonies like that were insisted on. These things all together had a tremendous effect. I don't know why, but it was so. For one thing, it made life behind the lines more tolerable — more refreshing. In the line itself, it made officers more concise in giving their orders, and men more alert and intelligent in carrying them out. In fact, the greater the fuss a regiment made about its appearance — 'eye-wash,' we called it — the better its work in the field."

"Things worked out that way with us too, even in home training," corroborated Powers.

"So I noticed. I was in four or five big camps, in different States, and I found that the rate of progress in training varied almost directly with the discipline."

"Which camp did you like best?"

The British officer turned to Miss Lane, and shook his head. "No, you don't, Miss Lane!" he replied. "I belong to the most tactless race in the world, but I know enough to keep out of trouble of that kind! I had a gorgeous time in *all* of them."

At this point a timely bugle blew for boat drill, and the harassed veteran stumped off.

Boat drill occurs at frequent intervals, and is still sufficient of a novelty to be regarded as an amusement.

By all, that is, except the *habitués* — the crew, the stewards, and that anæmic race of troglodytes which only emerges from the lower depths of the ship under the stress of great emergency — the army of dish-washers and potato-peelers. These fall in at their posts with the half-ashamed self-consciousness of big boys who have been compelled by an undiscriminating hostess to participate in children's games. They grin sheepishly, shiver ostentatiously in the fresh breeze, and offer profane but amusing comments in an undertone to one another.

But few of the present passengers have ever been on board a ship before. Indeed, many of us never saw the ocean until last week. War and its appurtenances are for the present a game, full of interesting surprises and wonderful thrills. It is surprising, for instance, however good your appetite may have been in camp, to find how much more you can eat on board ship; and it is thrilling, if you happen to be a rustic beauty from a very small town in Central Iowa, to find yourself dancing the one-step, in a life-jacket, with a total stranger in uniform, upon an undulating deck to the music of a full military band.

So most of us have entered upon the business with all the misguided enthusiasm of the gentleman who once blacked himself all over to play "Othello." Some of us sleep in our clothes; others

carry all their valuables about their person; not a few donned patent life-saving contraptions before we cleared Sandy Hook. But no one appears the least nervous: there is a pleasurable excitement about everything. And we listen with intense respect to the blood-curdling reminiscences of the crew, particularly the stewards. All our cabin stewards have been torpedoed at least three times, and every single one of them was on board the *Lusitania* when she was sunk. The survivors of the *Lusitania* must be almost as numerous by this time as the original ship's company of the *Mayflower*.

CHAPTER THREE

THE LOWER DECK

If you clamber down the accommodation ladder on to the well-deck amidships, you will find yourself in a world which will enable you to contemplate War from yet another angle.

For a guide and director I can confidently recommend Mr. Al Thompson, late of Springfield, Illinois — "No, *sir*, not Massachusetts!" he will be careful to inform you — now a seasoned ornament of a Trench Mortar Battery.

"We sure are one dandy outfit," he observes modestly. "Two hundred roughnecks! I'll make you known to a few. There's Eddie Gillette: you seen him box last night, out on the forward deck there? Yep? Well, you certainly seen something!"

We certainly had. Boxing is an ideal pastime for a large, virile, and closely packed community, for several reasons. In the first place, it requires very little space. A twelve-foot ring will do: indeed, towards the end of an exciting bout the combatants can—or must—make shift with mere elbow-room. In the second, the novice extracts quite as much exercise and excitement from the sport as the expert — possibly more. Thirdly and most important, boxing fulfils the cardinal principle of providing for the greatest good of the greatest number, because it affords far more undiluted happiness to the spectators than to the performers.

Last night, for instance, when Mr. Hank Magraw (weight two hundred pounds), a gladiator mainly conspicuous for unruffled urbanity and entire ignorance of the rules of boxing, growing a trifle restive under the cumulative effect of three consecutive taps upon the point of the chin from an opponent half his size, suddenly gathered that gentleman into his arms and endeavoured to stuff him down one of those trumpet-mouthed ventilators which lead to the stokehold, the spectators voiced their appreciation by a vociferous encore.

A wonderful sight these spectators are. They are banked up all around the well-deck, forming a deep pit, in the bottom of which two boxers gyrate, clash, and recoil like nutshells in a whirlpool. Tier upon tier they rise — with their long, lean, American bodies, and tense, brown, American faces — seated in concentric circles on the deck itself, perched on hatches and deck-houses and skylights, clinging to davits and ventilators, or hanging in clusters from the rigging — all yelling themselves hoarse.

The "announcer" — one Buck Stamper — stands for the moment at the bottom of the vortex. With each of his muscular arms he encircles the shrinking figure of a competitor, and introduces the pair to the audience.

"Boys," he bellows, in a voice which must be easily audible in the surrounding transports, "one of the English officers up there has come across with — with — a ten-shilling certificate" — he releases one of his *protégés* in order to display a pink-

and-white British treasury note — "to be awarded to the winner of this bout."

There is a little polite applause. Then a stentorian voice enquires:

"How much is that — in money?"

There is a great roar of laughter. The announcer retires, to seek an expert financier. A British marine enlightens him, and he announces:

"'Bout two dollars-and-a-half. On my right I have Ikey Zingbaum, of the Field Ambulance —"

The immediate conjunction of Ikey Zingbaum and two-and-a-half dollars appeals to the crowd's sense of humour. When they have recovered, Buck Stamper proceeds:

"On my left" — he thrusts forward a smooth-chinned, pink-cheeked, lusty, country lad — "Miss Sissy Smithers, what has got in among the boys by mistake!"

Amid yells of delight the blushing Sissy shakes hands with his tallow-faced opponent, and falls promptly upon his neck. The pair, locked in a complicated embrace, circle slowly round the ring, feebly patting one another on the back. At the urgent suggestion of the spectators the referee separates them, caustically observing that this is a fight and not a fox-trot. For a short time they stand uneasily apart; then Ikey Zingbaum, stimulated possibly by his supporters' constant references to the ten-shilling certificate, leans suddenly forward and boxes his opponent's ears. Miss Sissy, stung into indignant activity, lunges out with all his strength and counters fairly and squarely in the pit of Ikey's

stomach. Mr. Zingbaum shuts up like a footrule, and shoots stern-foremost into the thick of the audience. He is extracted amid shouts of laughter, groaning horribly, and receives first aid from a dozen willing but inexperienced hands. Presently he recovers sufficiently far to be informed that he has been awarded the match — on a foul. Miss Sissy, not ill-pleased with himself, modestly disappears.

"Yes," continued Al Thompson, "you seen something. Was you there when Eddie Gillette fit that duck what we call Coca-Kola? No? I'm sorry. Coca-Kola's a Turk. Comes from Turkey, I mean. Las' winter, when he was fighting around the Bowery, he would eat raw meat whenever he could get it. Said it kept him kinder fit. Anyway, he was put up las' night against Eddie Gillette. We picked on Ed because he was the best man in the Trench Mortar Section, and Coca-Kola had been winning out all the time for the Machine Gunners, where he belonged, and they was blowing some. Ed was giving away more than seventeen pounds of weight, besides which the Turk was the sort of guy that if he was short of money he would go up to a person an' say: 'You give me two bits and I'll let you hit me on the jaw any place you like!' That was the kind of lobster Coca-Kola was, and gives you some sort of an idea what Ed was up against!

"The match was to be ten rounds of two minutes each. There was five dollars donated by an officer for the winner, and some powerful side-bets. But it was all over in one round. Eddie started by

rushing in and giving the Turk a silly little tap on the nose. That seemed to get the Turk's goat, for he went for Eddie like a cyclone, and rushed him all around the ring for maybe a minute. At the end of that he gave him a blow on the body that laid him flat on the deck. We all thought Eddie was gone for sure. The time-keeper had counted up to five before he come to life at all. Then he began to recover, very slow. At 'seven' he rolled over on his face. The Turk, reckoning that Eddie was too dopy to go on any more, just straddled around in the middle of the ring, looking up to the deck above for the officer that was donating the five bucks. But at 'nine' Eddie was on his feet again, like a streak. No one hardly saw him get up. All they did see was Eddie *soak* the Turk under the point of the jaw — which was well up in the air at the time. Coca-Kola fairly knocked a groan out of the deck when he struck it. It took them two hours to bring him round. Gee, but it was some soak! Some of the Machine Gun boys cut open Eddie's glove after, because they suspicioned he might have a chunk of lead there. But there were n't nothing there. No, *sir!* Nothing but Eddie's little old punch!"

We are presented both to the victorious Eddie and the dethroned masticator of raw meat. The latter is inclined to be taciturn; but the former, true to national use and custom, is quite ready to be interviewed.

Yes, this is his first trip across, but he is not sea-sick, and does not expect to be. Reason; he has spent twelve years on the Great Lakes, and a man

that can stand the up-and-down convulsions of, say, Lake Michigan during a winter storm, need not fear the spacious roll of the Atlantic.

"There's a ten-thousand-ton ship has went down there before now," says Eddie, referring apparently to Lake Michigan, "just because them twisty seas has sheered the heads clean off her bolts and opened her up. Kinder ripped her, I guess. Every October owners raises the pay of all hands on them ships fifteen per cent — raises it voluntary."

"Why?"

"Because the whole bunch would quit if they did n't!"

This does not sound like a very convincing example of the voluntary system; but the great are permitted to be inconsistent. Mr. Gillette, proceeding, considers that life on board this ship is tolerable, but the food monotonous. Another gentleman, chewing tobacco, now joins the symposium. He is introduced as Joe McCarthy, of Oklahoma.

"You said it!" he announces, referring apparently to the food question. "Especially the coffee. The stuff they serve on board this packet ain't got no kick to it."

He is reminded that he has passed out of the coffee belt, and that he is approaching a land of tea-drinkers.

"Tea or coffee," he rejoins, with the dogged persistence of the professional grumbler, "it don't make no difference to me. And another thing. This

yer travelling by sea is a lonesome business. Give me a railroad! There you can look out of the window of the car and see folks waving their hands to you; and presents of candy at the deepo, and everything. While this" — he flings a disparaging glance over the heaving Atlantic — "this is all the same, all the time!"

"Well, Joe," explains the fair-minded Al Thompson, "I guess we *got* to travel to Europe this way, seeing there ain't no railroad across — leastways not at present."

But Mr. McCarthy refuses to be comforted.

"Europe!" he exclaims. "There y' are! Europe — four thousand miles from America! Some folks must be darned anxious for war, if they got to send us four thousand miles to find it!"

This last sentiment produces a distinct sensation. It is adjudged by those who hear it to border on pro-Germanism. Heads turn sharply in Joe's direction. A certain licence is permitted to professional grouchers; but "knocking" the Cause is the one thing that the New Crusaders will not permit.

That simple-hearted American, Al Thompson, conveys the necessary reproof, in a manner which more highly-placed diplomatists might envy.

"Listen, Joe," he remarks: "that stuff don't go here. I know you been mighty seasick, and you're sore on the food, and the monotony, and the other little glooms that come around on a slow trip like this. But whenever *I* git sore on things just now, like we all do, I just remember them dirty bums

over there marching through Belgium with little babies on their bayonets; and then — well, all I care about is *getting* over there and killing any guy that calls himself a Dutchman. Let me kill a few of them first — and, even if they kill me after, I should worry!"

CHAPTER FOUR

THE DANGER ZONE

THERE are many other types on board. Here is one at your elbow. He is a sentry, on Number Nine post. His duties appear to be confined to scrutinizing the ocean for periscopes. This is not a very arduous task, for we are not in the danger zone at present. Indeed, a good deal of this sentry's time appears to be spent in gazing over the taffrail towards the setting sun — towards America. Possibly he ought to be straining his eyes towards France. But we are all human, especially the American soldier boy, and this boy is unaffectedly and avowedly homesick. Jim Cleaver's thoughts at the present moment are nowhere near Number Nine post; they are centred upon a little township called Potsdam, far away. This sounds good and blood-thirsty: unfortunately this particular Potsdam is not in Prussia, but "way up" somewhere in the State of New York; and Jim's imagination is concerned less with the House of Hohenzollern than with the House of Cleaver — particularly the feminine portion thereof. Moreover, it happens to be Sunday evening; and we all know what that means.

At the other corner of the deck stands Antonio. That is not his real name, but no matter. He will inform you that he has already crossed the ocean — once. A brief exercise in mental arithmetic will

presently cause you to realize that Antonio cannot have been born in America. This is so. He crossed over ten years ago, in the steerage of an Austrian Lloyd liner, outward bound from Trieste, on his way from the sunny but unremunerative plains of Lombardy, in search of a mysterious Eldorado called Harlem, New York. And now here he is, aged twenty-six, picked out by the groping hand of the Selective Draft, on his way back again, to help rend those same plains (among others) from the Hun and restore them to their rightful owners. He is quite cheerful at the prospect, though he would sooner be with the Italian Army than with the American. Not that he is lacking in patriotism towards the land of his adoption, but —

"I gotta two brother over there," he explains. "Besides, here I gotta talka da Ingleese. Alla same, I feela fine!"

Antonio is not the only man who is going back with a personal interest in the European situation. On a coil of rope on the well-deck, broad-faced and Turanian, sits another young man. If Antonio's real name is difficult to pronounce, this man's is out of range altogether; for he is a Russian. He is addressed indifferently as Clambakovitch or Roughneckski.

"I live fifty miles from German border," he says. "I come over here seven years ago: I go through Berlin and sail from Hamburg. Now the Germans have my home. I do not hear from my people for three years. So now I go home — through Berlin again!"

"And after that?"

After that, Clambakovitch Roughneckski's plans are perfectly definite. He is coming back to America — for good. Already he is wedded to the soil of Pennsylvania. Antonio's views are the same.

The affection of her children for America is a wonderful thing. Domestic or imported, it makes no matter. To the native-born American, America is still the little country — the little strip of coastline — which stood up successfully to a dunderheaded monarch in days when men did not govern themselves: to the naturalized American, America is the land which gave him his first real taste of personal liberty. Each cherishes America to-day — the one because he helped to make her free, the other because she has made him free.

We are in the danger zone now. It is difficult to realize that thrilling circumstance, because no one seems to worry at all.

The same games of shuffle-board, bull-board, chess, checkers, and bridge are in progress; each day sees the same guard-mountings, parades, and inspections; off duty, the same quantity of tobacco and chewing-gum is being consumed. Only if the ship is brought up short by a heavy sea, or an iron door clangs suddenly in some distant stokehold, are we conscious of any tension at all. For a moment heads are turned, or conversation breaks. But that is all. A year ago, old hands tell us, things were different. There really was cause for nervousness. But now, we are escorted, we are well-armed, and the worst we need fear is a few hours in the boats.

There is much speculation as to our destination. Is it the Mersey; the Clyde; Queenstown? Or France direct? Where are we now, anyway? Each noon, when the ship's officers appear upon the bridge in a body, and perform mysterious sun-worshipping rites with sextants, the amateur experts look knowing, and refer darkly to probable latitudes and longitudes. One, diagnosing the present commotion of billows as a "ground-swell," announces positively that we are just off the Bay of Biscay. Another, basing his conclusions upon the lengthening hours of daylight and the presence in our wake of certain sea-birds (herring-gulls, really) which he describes as "penguins," announces confidently that we are now well within the Arctic Circle and will ultimately fetch a compass to Aberdeen, *via* Iceland. The battle rages between these two extremes: probably a carefully worked-out average of opinion would bring us somewhere near the truth. Gunners are quite familiar with the process: they call it "bracketing." But it does not matter. The real fun will begin when we sight land, and the authorities upon the subject start in to identify it.

Another night has passed, and the question is settled. We have sighted land, and are informed that we may expect to make our port to-night. It is a breathless summer morning, and our great ships, which looked forlorn and insignificant amid the ocean wastes, appear to have swelled a good deal during the night. Certainly we form a stately pageant, for our escorting forces have been augmented.

Destroyers are beating the bounds, nosey little patrol-boats thread their way in and out of the flotilla; silver-grey monsters float above our heads in the blue, occasionally descending to dip a suspicious nose towards the glittering wavelets. One of them dives down gracefully to within hailing distance of our own ship. It is a sublime moment. A thousand Stetsons are waved in welcome, and an earnest query — the spontaneous greeting of Young America to Old England — is roared from one of our portholes:

"Say, you got any *beer* up there?"

At the forward end of the boat-deck Boone Cruttenden and Miss Lane were leaning over the rail, in that confidential conjunction invariable in all young couples, whether in war or peace, on the last day of a voyage. Boone's blue eyes surveyed the scene around him, and glowed.

"It makes you think a bit!" he exclaimed. "Here we are, thousands of us Americans, on board British ships, being convoyed into a British port by the British Navy. I wish the old Kaiser was here! And I wish some of our folks at home who are asking what the British Navy is doing in this war could be here too! They might learn then what is meant by the freedom of the seas!"

"Still," complained the youthful seeker after sensation, Miss Lane, "I did hope that we might have seen just one little submarine."

It is hard to refuse some people anything — especially American girls of twenty-three. Miss Lane's wish was promptly gratified. A few hundred

yards away, right in the middle of the convoy, there was suddenly protruded from the unruffled surface of the ocean a few feet of something grey, slender, and perpendicular — something which, after a hurried and perfunctory survey of the situation, retired unobtrusively whence it came. But not before it had been seen, and welcomed. For a brief minute shells burst around it, machine guns pattered imprecations over it, bombs descended upon it from the heavens above, and depth-charges detonated in the waters beneath. The convoy altered its formation, as prudence dictated. But nothing further happened. Calm reigned once more upon the face of the waters.

"Some little surprise for him, I guess," said Cruttenden. "Lying on the bottom, and just came up for a look around! He did not expect to poke his periscope into this hornet's nest, I should say. I wonder if anything hit him. I guess not: he was too slick. But you had your thrill right enough, Miss Lane!"

Miss Lane sighed rapturously.

"The censor has just *got* to pass that when I write home," she announced.

Late that evening we made our port. On our way in we passed a British cruiser, coaling. The band was playing, as is usual during coaling. Our tall ship slid past in the dusk, undemonstratively, almost surreptitiously. One of the tragedies of modern warfare lies in its anonymity. You may not display your true colours or advertise your presence any-

where — even to your friends. So we crept past. But a sailor can read ships as a landsman reads books. The cruiser's band stopped suddenly, right in the middle of a tune, and in two minutes the cruiser's sides, rigging, and tops were crowded with half-naked, coal-grimed humanity yelling themselves hoarse to the roaring multitude on the liner.

"Listen!" shouted Boone Cruttenden into his companion's ear, as a fresh burst of sound added itself to the tumult; "their band has struck up again. Can you hear it?"

"No! Yes, I do now. I guess it's 'God Save the King,' or one of those tunes."

But Miss Lane was wrong. Suddenly the cheering died away for a moment, and the band made itself heard, joyfully and triumphantly, for the first time.

And the tune it played was "Over There."

"Oh, *gee!*" said Miss Lane, with a sob in her voice. "Oh, gee!"

CHAPTER FIVE

TERRA INCOGNITA

We have not yet reached France, but we have discovered England. It is a small island, and the visitor must be prepared for a primitive civilization — for instance, *The Saturday Evening Post* costs at least fifteen cents — but it offers a fruitful and interesting field for exploration.

Our debarkation was not attended by any marked popular demonstration. Some of us were inclined to resent the omission as savouring of insular aloofness. But now we know the real reason. *We are not supposed to be here.* We are a dead secret. The port in which we disembarked has no name. Its inhabitants are plunged into an official trance. Therefore it would hardly be reasonable to expect the insensible population of an anonymous city to proffer a civic welcome to American soldiers who are officially invisible anyway.

However, by a fortunate accident at the moment of our arrival, a band of musicians happened to be discoursing melody on the wharf, including such airs as "The Star-Spangled Banner" and "Dixie." Moreover, a group of British Staff Officers groped their way on board our imperceptible vessel and greeted us cordially. They furthermore presented to every man of us copies of a letter written by King George with his own hand, bid-

ding us welcome to his realm and expressing a wish that it were possible for him to shake hands with each one of us in person. Scores of copies of that letter are now already on their way home to America — the first souvenir of the War.

Thereafter we were packed into a child's train, drawn by a toy engine, and conveyed at a surprising pace through a country of green fields, cut up into checker-board squares by hedges and narrow lanes, populated mainly by contemplative cows and dotted with red-roofed farms and villages.

Occasionally we passed a camp. The tents were toylike and tidy, like the country. They fitted the landscape, just as a great four-square American Army tent, with its wooden walls and dust-coloured canvas top, fits in with a Texan horizon. In these camps were men in khaki — some drilling, some performing ablutions in buckets, some kicking a football. Mr. Joe McCarthy's passion for being waved at was at length gratified.

Occasionally we stopped at the station of some town. These were always crowded, as were the trains. The strange little compartments in which the English confine themselves when travelling were packed with humanity — some of it standing up and clinging to the luggage-rack — all of it encumbered with much personal property in the shape of bundles and babies. Evidently the War has cut down transportation. At either end of these trains a seething mob contended, with surprising good temper, around a mountain of heavy baggage piled upon the platform beside the express-van.

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"Ain't they got no Red Caps in this country?" enquired Mr. McCarthy in disparaging tones.

"Their Red Caps are all wearing tin helmets over in France," replied the well-informed Al Thompson. "Everybody here up to fifty is drafted. Folks have to tote their own grips. I notice quite a few women porters around. I guess their husbands are in France, and these are holding down their jobs for them."

In which Al spoke no more than the truth.

Meanwhile, in another part of the train, our friend Jim Nichols, Major Powers, and one Bond, a stout, comfortable representative of the Medical Service, together with Boone Cruttenden — the latter somewhat *distrait*, for Miss Frances Lane had been swept away with the other ninety-and-nine, by a different train, to be no more seen — were sharing a compartment with Captain Norton and a British Staff Officer — a youthful Major. The Major's name was Floyd; he had materialized during the chaos of debarkation. Norton had introduced him to the American officers; stately salutes had been exchanged; gentlemen had stated in a constrained manner that they were pleased to know one another; the whole party had crowded into one compartment, and the train had started.

For nearly an hour almost total silence reigned. Americans are sensitive folk, and Floyd's melancholy visage and paralyzing monocle fulfilled our friends' most pessimistic anticipations of the British Staff Officer. After a few laboured commonplaces the conversation lapsed altogether, and the

Americans devoted their attention to the flying landscape.

Norton, a little uncomfortable, glanced occasionally in the direction of his brother officer. Major Floyd sat bolt upright in his seat, his gaze focussed upon infinity. Norton, who was a man of warm heart and quick temper, was conscious of a vague feeling of resentment.

"I wonder," he mused, "why an image like this should have been sent as conducting officer. No wonder Americans think us unsociable and rude. And people over there were so good to us —"

At this moment Floyd removed his monocle and addressed his right-hand neighbour — Boone Cruttenden.

"And now, Lieutenant, what are your impressions of our country?"

Boone Cruttenden smiled. "You have not given me much time to formulate any, Major," he said, glancing at his wrist-watch. "Just an hour!"

"That is fifty-nine minutes longer than the *World* reporter gave me when I landed at West Twenty-Third Street ten years ago," replied Floyd.

"You know America?" Four homesick Americans spoke simultaneously.

Floyd's eyes twinkled.

"Some of it," he said. "I was with the General Electric Company at Schenectady for three years. After that I worked on various electrical-engineering jobs for about four years; I got as far west as Cincinnati. I'm not a professional warrior, like Norton there."

"Still, you have seen service in this War?" said Major Powers.

"Oh, yes, I managed to get home from America just in time for the start of things."

"Have you served in France, or on one of your other fronts?" asked Cruttenden. "The British Army has such a large selection."

"France all the time — *and* Belgium. Most of us have taken a course of the Ypres Salient."

"I guess those ribbons the Major is wearing would give us details, if we could read them," observed Jim Nichols. "What do they stand for, Major?"

Floyd laughed.

"As a traditional Englishman," he said, "I suppose I ought to hang my head confusedly and decline to answer. But I have spent ten years outside my own country, so I will tell you. This little fellow with the rainbow effect you probably know: Norton has it too. It means that we were both in Flanders in Nineteen Fourteen. The khaki, red, and blue is the Queen's Medal for the South African War. By the way, Major Powers, I notice that you have the Spanish War ribbon. What is your other one — the yellow and blue?"

"That relates to our Mexican Border troubles," replied Powers. "More discomfort than danger getting that. What is that third ribbon of yours — the red with the blue edges?"

"That? Oh, that is the D.S.O."

"What does that stand for?" asked Boone.

"Well, before the War it was popularly supposed

to stand for 'Dam Silly Officer!' Since then, however, the military profession has risen in the eyes of the world; so it now means 'Done Something or Other'!"

"And what did you get it for?" pursued the insatiable Boone.

Floyd laughed.

"Counting jam-tins at the Base!" he said.

"I suppose it was while counting jam-tins you lost your arm," suggested the quiet voice of Major Bond.

Floyd laughed again.

"You are too sharp for me, Doctor," he said. "I plead guilty. My left arm is an understudy. The original is astray somewhere around Beaumont Hamel. I have had to stay at home since then. But now I want to get back to my first question, Lieutenant. What are your impressions of this country — your first impressions? I really do want to know. I have been aching to ask you for the last hour, but I felt that I had to play up a little first. Monocle — vacant stare, and all that! The traditional Englishman, in fact. I felt you were entitled to meet one," continued this eccentric man; "and I took especial pains to give you a good impersonation, because you may experience some difficulty in finding another. The fact is, the traditional Englishman is getting rare. We have all been shaken out of ourselves these days. After the War he may come back — perhaps. Perhaps not." He sighed gently. "But at present I am here to supply you with information about the customs and institutions of this

country. I am detailed for the job. I am paid for it. Please ask me questions, somebody?"

No one could resist this solemn appeal. First one query was proffered, then another. Presently the American passion for getting to the root of the matter was in full play.

"Why did the English travel in closed boxes? Why were the locomotives so small, and why did they burn soft coal? Why were there so many overhead bridges when a grade-crossing would suffice? What would be the wages of that old man working in that field? What was that bright yellow crop growing in that section? Why did vehicles in a street keep to the left? Was there any organized system of irrigation, that the country was all so green? Was there game in those woods, and who had the right to hunt it?"

Norton, a professional soldier from his school days, knew nothing of many of these things. He was also a typical Englishman, and had been brought up to accept matters as he found them. But he was the son of an English country squire, and he was able to name the various crops — meadow-grass, hay-grass, wheat, oats, barley, potatoes, beans — whose variegated colours impart to an English landscape its curious crazy-quilt effect. He was well-versed, too, in agricultural economics and the hoary traditions of the feudal system, and discoursed voluminously, as an Englishman will when started upon his own subject, upon farm-labourers' wages, the rotation of crops, and the Ground Game Act.

Floyd, who agreed with Dr. Samuel Johnson in regarding one green field as very like another green field, recked nothing of these things. But he was a mine of information on railroad management. To a deeply interested audience he traced the origin of the standard railway gauge of the world back to an obscure English colliery road of George Stephenson's days: he ascribed the multitude of overhead bridges and tightly locked level crossings to the benevolent fussiness of the Board of Trade. He even knew — to the frank amazement of Captain Norton — the maximum height from rail-level to which a British locomotive, by reason of the aforesaid bridges, can aspire — thus accounting for the stunted appearance of the same by comparison with its American brother, which in an atmosphere of greater freedom is permitted to soar some nine feet higher. Greatly daring, he even justified the British custom of keeping to the left, on the ground that it dated back to the days when men rode on horseback, and riders and postilions, to mount or dismount, must perforce draw in to the near side of the road.

An American is forever battling between two instincts — native appreciation of what is modern and efficient, and inherited veneration for what is ancient and inconvenient. Common sense usually compels him to favour the former; but he is never so happy as when he can conserve or justify the latter.

Major Floyd gratified this instinct. He carried his hearers back to the days of stage-coaches. He

told of the opening of the Stockton and Darlington Railway; of Brunel and the Broad Gauge; of the railway races in the nineties, when the Scottish Express ran four hundred miles in seven hours. Altogether, in his able hands, "Romance brought up the Nine Fifteen."

The locomotive gave a shriek, and the train began to slow down. Major Powers turned from the contemplation of a tiny English town nestling in a shallow valley a mile away. With its red roofs and square church tower set against a background of living green, it looked the embodiment of uneventful drowsiness. Certainly a little imagination was required to realize that under nearly every one of these same roofs there stood at least one empty chair — a chair that might or might not be occupied again — and that beneath that ancient tower for four long years, week by week, in good times and in bad, women, children, and old men had congregated to pray that those whose names were inscribed upon the illuminated scroll in the church porch — squire's son, parson's son, farmer's son, poacher's son — might in God's good time come home again, having achieved the purpose for which they had set out.

Powers possessed the requisite imagination. He had been reared in Kentucky — that land of fair women and noble horses. This toy town, which could have been transported bodily into his native State without materially affecting either the landscape or the census, appealed to him, as small children appeal to large people.

He turned to Norton, and said simply:

"Captain, I have never been outside of America before. I have been looking over this little island of yours, and I want to tell you, right now, that I think it is worth fighting for!"

"Thanks awfully," said Norton gravely, and offered an unexpected hand.

CHAPTER SIX

SOCIAL CUSTOMS OF THE ISLANDERS

We are now at a rest-camp, recharging our batteries after the fatigues of sea travel before proceeding to the conquest of Germany.

The camp is situated deep in rural England. At our feet, in a valley, lies an ancient city, dominated by a mighty cathedral. It was once a walled city, but only the gates remain now — King's Gate and West Gate. At the top of the High Street stands a great rough-hewn statue of Alfred the Great — dead for more than a thousand years. He makes a fine figure, with his coat of mail and uplifted broadsword. Mr. Eddie Gillette, among whose sterling virtues sentiment finds no place, compares him, not unfavourably, with a New York traffic cop. Mr. Joe McCarthy, still dyspeptic from the effects of prolonged ocean travel, describes the deceased monarch as a tough guy, and adds further that in his opinion this is a dead town. Al Thompson, of finer clay, inspects the statue approvingly, then passes on with a handful of interested spectators to the cathedral, whose grey walls keep eternal vigil over the dust of Saxon, Norman, and English dead — much of it ancestral American dust.

Elderly gentlemen in maroon dressing-gowns conduct the party round, and in piping tones introduce the New World to the Old. But not all Old. In one nook of the great fabric, guarded by Old Glory itself, gleaming brightly in the twilight,

stands an Innovation — a temporary shrine dedicated to fallen American soldiers, particularly those who have died in English hospitals from wounds received in France. After the War the memorial is to take the form of a permanent stained-glass window. At present in England people are not manufacturing stained-glass windows — only earning them.

The countryside is full of camps — typically English — not spacious and bewildering such as those which scared the mountaineer from Tennessee, but prim and tidy, like an English kitchen-garden. The white conical tents are set out in close, level rows, like cabbages. The Headquarters tent and the Officers' Mess are fenced in by a ring of curious boundary-stones, set a few feet apart and carefully whitewashed. The district is full of English soldiers. We have never seen them before, and we regard them with interest. We note with gratification that they are in the main smaller than ourselves and not so well set-up, though sturdy enough. Their teeth appear to require attention: gold teeth have not yet reached this country. They wear ragged mustaches, and smoke eternal cigarettes. The language that they speak is entirely incomprehensible.

Their officers, on the other hand, present a decidedly gay and frivolous appearance. They look very young; they wear their caps at a rakish angle; they carry canes. They are secretly regarded by many of us as verging upon the Clarence class. But the old stagers of our camp warn us not to form

our judgments too hastily. When we are able to read the biography which every British soldier carries upon his sleeve or breast — scraps of ribbon, service chevrons, wound stripes, and the like — we will realize that things, especially in England, are not always what they seem.

In fact, we have begun to realize this already. They are not communicative, the people we meet here. They talk little of the War, except possibly to belittle their own conduct thereof or disparage their own leaders; but we are dimly conscious that England is not making a display of company manners at present. Her luxurious private parks are scarred by horse-lines; her golf-courses are growing potatoes. Her great country-houses, badly in need of paint and plaster, are flying Red Cross flags, and convalescent soldiers in hospital blue lounge upon balustraded terraces where peacocks were wont to strut. Her automobiles appear to have enlisted in the Army: they wear a business-like uniform of grey paint, and are driven by attractive young women in khaki. Every one appears to wear a uniform of some kind — certainly no one wears mourning — and all seem too busy to worry about ceremony.

When we arrived in this town, after our long cross-country journey from our landing port, we were conscious of a pleasant feeling of anticipation. We thought of the folk who had seen us off at home — cramming the railway stations, cheering, waving, weeping — and though we naturally did not expect such a demonstration, we did expect some-

thing. Well, it did not turn out that way. We arrived almost furtively, in the dead of night, in a station where one gas-lamp in six was burning. We were warned to fall in quietly, and to refrain from noise as we marched through the town.

"Not a very overwhelming display of cordiality, I'm afraid," said Major Floyd; "but we are up against official secrets again. A lady called Dora:[1] you will become well acquainted with her. It is not officially known to any one — except the Boche, of course — that this is an American Rest Depot, so we are concealing the fact from the inhabitants. The streets are a bit dark, I'm afraid; but we are precious short of coal — supplying France and Italy as well as ourselves — and that hits our lighting arrangements rather hard. Besides, we have the Gothas to think of. Are your men ready to move off, Colonel? Very good: I'll lead the way. You will notice our solitary attempt at the glad-hand business just outside the station."

The "solitary attempt" proved to be a discreetly illuminated notice spanning the street on the *façade* of an arch. It said: WELCOME, AMERICA!

As an emotional outburst the greeting was perhaps open to criticism on the score of reticence; but to some of us, who knew our stiff, angular, inarticulate England better than others, there was something rather moving about the whole idea.

We tramped under the sign. Those who had the fancy to turn and look up at the other face of the arch found another notice: GOD-SPEED!

[1] D.O.R.A. Defence of the Realm Act.

"'God-speed'! That's a bit sudden," observed a young machine-gunner to a grizzled English sergeant who was acting as assistant shepherd. "We've hardly arrived yet."

"That ain't meant for you, my lad," replied the veteran. "You ain't supposed to read that — yet. That's for another lot of your boys what are starting off to-night for France. You'll likely meet 'em coming down the 'ill as you goes up."

We did. And when the event took place — when the two bands of tramping American exiles brushed hands for a moment in the soft summer darkness of a strange land — I fear there was some transgression of official regulations on the subject of silent and secret night marching. But, after all, there are limits to human virtue.

Yes, everybody here appears decidedly busy — especially the women. That shrewd observer of humanity, Al Thompson, does not fail to remark upon the fact in a letter to his wife:

You get kind of used here to see a woman do all the chores that we all considered a man's job. Driving automobiles, or cleaning windows high up in the air, or delivering mails, or tending a street-car, or despatching trains. They have boys, quite little fellers, to help them with the trains. The woman does the work and the boy blows a whistle, like what you would expect of a boy. I seen a whole bunch of girls one day outside a factory, with their faces and hands stained yellow. That was picric acid: they make shells with it. It spoils their looks some, but they should worry. They just waved their hands and laughed at us when we tried to josh them. I reckon the girls at home are all doing that too now; but don't you go for to stain yourself yellow, my dear.

But the Islanders are not too busy to make an attempt to entertain us. Some of these attempts are rather formidable. To boys like Second Lieutenant Sam Richards and his crony Jim Hollis, in whose pleasant little home town far west of the Alleghenies every one knows every one else, and young men and maidens usually exchange invitations over the telephone (which instrument is practically unknown in English rural districts), and that awful shibboleth of English society, the language of the third person, is happily extinct, it is a little alarming to find upon the bulletin-board in the Mess a stiff square of white pasteboard bearing the legend:

Col. Adams and Officers

LADY WYVERN-GRYPHON
AT HOME
SATURDAY, JULY 6TH, 3:30 P.M. — 7:00
AT
LAWN TENNIS BROADOAK PARK R.S.V.P.

Jim Hollis scrutinized this document whimsically. Then he turned to his companion.

"We must get this right," he said. "Who is Lady Wy-Wy —?"

"Never mind," said Sam. "Call her Lady Whiskey-Syphon — I bet the name is n't pronounced the way it's spelled, anyway."

"Well," continued Jim, "who *is* Lady Whiskey-Syphon, and what does this 'ad.' mean?"

"It means," replied Sam, whose sense of humour was always stimulated by the contemplation of British National institutions, "that this Lady has been away and now she's back home."

"For three and a half hours?"

"Yes. These people have a bunch of homes, like our millionaires. They own real-estate lots all over the country, and it stands to reason they have a home in each."

"And why does she put 'Lawn Tennis' down there in that corner?"

"Because she's going to *play* lawn tennis, from three-thirty to seven. That's easy."

"But what does she want to tell us for? We are nothing in her young life."

"She wants us to go play with her," explained Sam gently. "Nobody can play lawn tennis by themselves. She wants *you*, boy."

"Where does it say that?" enquired the incredulous James.

"It does n't say it. The English don't say it. It would sound too eager. They just mention the event casually, and if you want to go you can."

"But I don't want to go."

"Well, write and say so."

"Why? It does n't tell me to do that on the card."

"Does n't it? Jim Hollis, have n't you got any sisters to tell you what things mean? Look at that

R.S.V.P. down there! That's the reference-number of the file, and you quote it in replying."

Jim paled.

"Listen, how do you address anybody like that?" he enquired, despairingly.

Sam's eyes twinkled.

"Ask the Adjutant," he advised.

Reference to that overworked official elicited the information that the invitation had already been accepted by the Colonel on behalf of the Mess, and that if the regiment were still in England on July the sixth two or three officers would be detailed to accompany him to Broadoak Park.

"Me for the backwoods on the sixth!" murmured Master Hollis fervently.

But the very next day, as Jim and Sam were toiling up the hill to the camp after inspecting the cathedral, they were overtaken by an elderly automobile. It drew up beside them, and a rather gruff voice enquired:

"Won't you get in and let me drive you up to the camp? I am going that way, anyhow."

They accepted gratefully — it was a blazing hot day — and presently found themselves chatting composedly, with the American's natural instinct for easy conversation, with a high-nosed, deep-voiced old lady in black.

"One ought to be thankful to be able to drive anywhere these days," remarked their hostess — "let alone give any one a lift. Do you know how much petrol the Controller allows me? Ten gallons a month! And I live five miles from a railway sta-

tion! It used to be six gallons, but I get a little more now because I am taking in more patients. My house is a hospital, you know."

They did not know; but it did not seem to matter, for the old lady continued:

"I hope you are coming to my tennis-party on the sixth. You will meet some charming girls — mostly V.A.D.'s. You got a card, I suppose?"

Jim, shrinking back into the cushions, pressed uneasily upon the toe of his brother officer. But Lady Wyvern-Gryphon swept on:

"I realized afterwards how stupid I had been to send out the cards at all. It would have been much simpler and more considerate to do what I am doing now — pay an informal call on your Colonel and ask him to bring along any officers who might have nothing better to do on the day, instead of bothering busy men to answer silly written invitations. But one can never do a thing except in the way one has done it for forty years — even with a War on. You must have thought me very tiresome." (She pronounced it "tarsome.") "What quaint experiences you must be having among us!"

"We are having very pleasant experiences," said Jim.

"That's nice of you. You said it much more promptly than an Englishman would have done, too. Do you know," continued this most informal *grande dame*, rounding suddenly upon the speaker, "that when you smile you are amazingly like my second son?"

"He is in France, I suppose?" hazarded Jim.

"Yes — he is in France. And — he is not coming back to me, I fear." The old lady's voice was as gruff as ever. "It happened at Le Cateau, nearly four years ago. He was mentioned in Despatches, though. One will always feel glad of that."

"And proud," added Sam Richards.

"Oh, yes — proud too. Pride is the greatest boon bestowed on mothers in war-time. I don't know why the clergy are always preaching against it. Before this War I possessed four sons, and a certain modicum of pride. Now I have only one son, but I have four times as much pride. One finds it very sustaining. Have you boys mothers?"

Both boys nodded assent.

"Well, if you will give me their addresses I will write to them both, and say I have seen you. Mothers like first-hand information, you know."

Visiting-cards were produced shyly, and disappeared into a little black bag.

"I have never been in America," continued Lady Wyvern-Gryphon. "But one of my daughters-in-law is American. She came from Philadelphia. Is that anywhere near your homes? You know it, at any rate."

They confessed that they lived some fifteen hundred miles from Philadelphia.

"Indeed!" remarked her ladyship, not at all perturbed. "That is interesting. We have no conception of distance in this country. Now tell me, how does an American country town differ from a

town like this? What does a street look like, compared with one of ours?"

"Wider, and straighter," said Jim.

"With maple trees growing along," added Sam.

"The houses are wooden," continued Jim, warming up — "painted white, with a piazza, and wire doors to keep the flies out in —"

"And no fences between the houses," continued Sam, almost shouting. "And none in front. You just step right down on the street."

"And in summer-time," interrupted Jim, with eyes closed rapturously, "when the sun strikes down through the maple trees, an' — oh, *gee*, I wish I was there now!"

After that our two lieutenants took entire charge of the conversation. They conducted Lady Wyvern-Gryphon, street by street, block by block, through their home town. They described the railroad station, where the great trunk track runs through and the mail trains pause for brief refreshment on their long journey to the Pacific Coast. They described the Pullman cars; the porters with their white jackets and black faces; they related, with affectionate relish, one or two standard anecdotes aimed at that common target of American sarcasm, the upper berth. They described the street-car system, and explained carefully that to get from Sam's house to Jim's you had to change cars at the corner of M Street and Twenty-first —

"There's a drug-store on the corner," mentioned Jim. (Whether as a topographical pointer or in

wistful reference to far-distant ice-cream soda, is not known.)

They passed on to the million-dollar Insurance Building downtown; the State University on the hill above; the Country Club, with its summer games and winter dances. Finally, being American and not English, they spoke frankly, naturally, and appreciatively of their womenkind. Altogether, being but boys, and homesick boys at that, they spoke all that was in their hearts, and incidentally conveyed considerable warmth to the heart of a rather formidable, extremely lonely, old lady.

They saluted politely when the time came to part, and informed their new friend that they were very pleased to have known her.

"And I am very pleased to have known *you!*" replied her ladyship, with a heartiness which would have surprised some of her friends. "Don't bother about that tennis invitation. You probably won't be here, anyway, to judge from the speed with which you all scuttle through this country. Come to lunch to-morrow instead, and tell me more."

They went.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THREE MUSKETEERS IN LONDON

Our stay in England has been prolonged beyond the usual time, chiefly because that impartial foe of the just and the unjust, the Spanish Influenza, has opened a campaign against us, and it is manifestly foolish to attack Germany before you have settled accounts with Spain.

Pending the time when our invalids shall be convalescent, we have had some interesting experiences. We have explored the countryside, and studied and analyzed the structure of insular society. We have consorted with Barons, Squires, and Knights of the Shire; with Bishops, Priests, and Deacons; with Waacs, Wrens, and V.A.D.'s; with Farmers, Hedgers, and Land Girls; with Mayors and Corporations. They are all interesting; most of them are quite human; and all, once you know them, are extremely friendly and anxious to entertain us.

For instance, there was the Fourth of July, officially celebrated in London. British Official — not American. The Americans are a patriotic people; but it certainly had not occurred to us, sojourning in Great Britain, to undertake, this year of all years, any ostentatious celebration of the foundation of our national liberties.

But John Bull would have none of this false delicacy.

"My dear fellow," he said in effect, "of *course* you must celebrate the Fourth of July. We know it is one of your greatest national festivals. We will help you. We will put up flags, arrange a demonstration, and devise special features for the day. Let me see — you usually have fireworks, don't you? Sorry! I'm afraid we can't quite manage fireworks this year. You see, they might be misconstrued into an air-raid warning. But anything else — bands, processions, baseball? My boy, you shall have them all! What else? Won't you require pumpkin-pie, or cranberry sauce, or something of that kind? Oh — that's *Thanksgiving?* I beg your pardon. Stupid of me to mix 'em. Anyway, you must have a jolly good time. We should never forgive ourselves if we did n't give you a chance to celebrate an occasion like that. I know how *we* should feel if we had to cut out Christmas, old man!"

We forbore to explain that Christmas is also, to a certain extent, a recognized festival in the United States, and merely accepted John Bull's invitation in the spirit in which it was offered — that is to say, with great heartiness but some vagueness as to the probable course of events.

However, everything worked out right on the day. On the Fourth of July, nineteen eighteen, London was turned over to the Americans. In the morning, parties of American soldiers and sailors proceeded to explore the town. They enquired politely of passers-by for the Tower of London; the Old Curiosity Shop; the Houses of Parliament,

Westminster Abbey; Buckingham Palace. The passers-by, though cordially disposed, did not always know where these places were. The Londoner takes his national monuments, like the British Constitution and the British Navy, for granted, and is seldom concerned with the Why and Wherefore thereof. However, we succeeded in discovering most of these places for ourselves, and were gratified to observe that Old Glory was amicably sharing a flagpole over the Palace of Westminster with the Union Jack.

By high noon most of us had squeezed ourselves into Central Hall, Westminster, where all the Americans in London seemed to be gathered, together with a goodly percentage of the native element. A solid wedge of convalescent soldiers in hospital blue supplied the necessary reminder of the Thing which had brought us together. The speakers included a British ex-Ambassador, venerated on both sides of the Atlantic, a British Cabinet Minister, an American Admiral, and an American General. Altogether, an affair to write home about.

Thereafter, refreshment, at the Eagle Hut, the Beaver Hut, Washington Inn, and other recently opened hospitality centres. At one of these Ikey Zingbaum succeeded during the rush of business in cashing a Confederate twenty-dollar bill, which had been "wished on" him one dark night some years previously, and which he had carried in his pocket, faint yet pursuing, ever since. He got four pounds sterling for it — a rate of interest more

indicative of International amity than financial condition.

Al Thompson, Ed Gillette, and that captious critic Joe McCarthy (not yet entirely recovered from dyspepsia incurred upon his maiden ocean voyage), pushed their way out of the crowded Hall into the blazing July sunshine, and enquired of one another simultaneously:

"Where do we eat?"

In a spirit of appropriate independence they decided to elude the special arrangements made for their entertainment and forage for themselves. From the moment of their embarkation from their native land their daily diet had been selected and provided by a paternal but unimaginative Department of State, and their stomachs cried out for something unusual, unexpected, and, if possible, unwholesome. But London has an area of seven hundred and fifty square miles. This offers an embarrassing choice of places of refreshment. They swung on their heels undecided.

"I guess we better ask some guy," suggested Ed Gillette.

The motion was seconded by Al Thompson.

"There's a Jock," he said. "Let's go ask him."

They approached their quarry — a squat figure in a kilt, with a round and overheated countenance beaming like a vermilion haggis under a voluminous khaki bonnet — and addressing him as "friend," enquired:

"Where do folks eat around here?"

The Scot smiled affably.

"I'm no varra weel acquent with this toon," he admitted. "If it was Airdrie, now, or Coatbridge! I'm awa' there to-night. I'm just on leave, like yourselves. But I doot we'll no be goin' far wrong if we keep along toward The Strand. Will I come with you?"

"Sure!" replied Ed Gillette heartily.

"This is on us," Al Thompson hastened to add.

The Scotsman led the way. Whether he had grasped the implied offer of hospitality is doubtful. However, that hardened cynic Joe McCarthy cherished no illusions on the subject. He sniffed contemptuously.

Their walk towards The Strand — it is to be feared that their guide's sense of direction was once or twice at fault — gave them further opportunities of studying the habits and customs of the strange race upon whom they had descended. In one quiet street — there are many such in London these days, for traffic is down to a minimum — they beheld a middle-aged lady hail a crawling taxicab. The driver of the vehicle took not the slightest notice, but slid upon his way.

"There's jest twa-three o' they taxis nowadays where formerly there was a hunnerd in a street," explained that man-about-town, Private Andrew Drummond. "Consequently, they can pick and choose. They'll no tak' a body that looks ower carefu' of their money. There's another yin! He'll give the auld wife the go-bye too, I'm thinking. She doesna look like yin o' the extravagant soort."

He was right. A second taxi sauntered past the gesticulating lady. This time the driver, after a single fleeting glance, condescended to flip his right hand in the air, in a gesture which may have been intended to indicate that he had particular business elsewhere, but more probably expressed his contempt for the pedestrian world in general.

The gesture was observed by a passing citizen — an elderly gentleman with white whiskers and spats — who, at first appropriating it to himself, stopped and glared at the offender. Then noting beauty in distress upon the sidewalk, he assailed the taxi with indignant cries.

"Hi, there! Taxi! Stop! Stop, there! Don't you see the lady hailing you?"

The taxi-driver perfectly impassive, pressed his accelerator.

"Stop, confound you!" yelled the old gentleman, waving his umbrella. "Stop, you blackguard! Don't you hear —"

This time the taxi-driver replied with a gesture quite unmistakable, and disappeared from sight round the corner.

The old gentleman turned apologetically to his Ariadne.

"Intolerable! Monstrous!" he announced. "If you will allow me, madam, I will stay and secure the next taxi for you, or give the man in charge."

"Boys," murmured the dreamy voice of that bonny fighter, Ed Gillette, "I guess we'll stay an' see this through. We're nootral, of course, but maybe we can hand the taxi-driver a Note!"

Without further pressure our four friends anchored in a favourable position on the opposite side of the sunny street, and awaited developments. One or two vehicles sped through, but they were either military automobiles or taxis carrying passengers. Once or twice a tradesman's delivery-van passed by, rendered top-heavy in appearance by a bloated gas-bag billowing upon the roof. But nothing else.

"'Nother dead town!" murmured Joe McCarthy, not without satisfaction.

As he spoke, another taxi, with flag up, swung round the corner. The old gentleman, taking up a frontal position in the middle of the street, waved his umbrella. The taxi, with a swerve that would have done credit to a destroyer avoiding a mine, eluded him, and resumed its normal course. This manœuvre accomplished, it slackened speed again.

But the British are a tenacious race. The elderly champion of the fair turned and ran with surprising swiftness after the receding vehicle. He overtook it. He took a flying leap upon the footboard beside the driver, and grasping that astonished malefactor by the collar with one hand laid hold of the side brake with the other. Employing the driver's neck as fulcrum, he pulled the lever with all his strength and jammed the brakes on hard. His baffled victim having automatically thrown open the throttle of the engine, the whirring back wheels, caught in the full embrace of the brake, skidded violently; the cab described a semicircle, and ran to a full stop on the sidewalk with its radi-

ator (which had narrowly missed Joe McCarthy) pressed affectionately against some one's area railings.

After this all concerned got into action with as little delay as possible. The old gentleman, descending from his perch, opened upon his opponent at a range of about three feet. Such phrases as "Ruffian!" "Bandit!" "Thug!" "Yahoo!" "Police!" "War on, too!" flew from him like hail. The driver, though obviously rattled by the complete unexpectedness of the attack, and further hampered by having swallowed the glowing stub of a cigarette, reacted (as they say in the official *communiqué*) with creditable promptness.

"Call yourself a gentleman?" he coughed. "'Ardworkin' man like me! . . . Over milingtary age! . . . Carryin' on as well as I can till the boys comes 'ome! . . . Disgrace, that's what you are! . . . Got a job in the War Office, I'll lay a tanner! . . . I'll summons you for assault and damagin' my keb! . . . The first copper I sees . . ."

And so on. Meanwhile the lady in the case, much to her own surprise, found herself propelled by four pairs of willing hands into the cab. This done, the door was shut upon her, and a soothing Scots-American chorus assured her through the window-glass that the entire matter would straightway be adjusted. ("Fixed" was the exact term employed.)

But now a new figure added itself to the tableau — a slightly nervous individual in blue, with silver buttons and flat peaked cap. He coughed

in a deprecating fashion, and produced a note-book.

"That a cop?" enquired Ed Gillette of the Scot.

"No jist exactly. He's a 'Special.' I doot he'll no be a match for the taxi-man."

But the Special Constable, though his lack of stolidity betrayed the amateur, had been well-drilled in his part.

"Now, then, now, then," he demanded sternly, "what's all this? Driver, what is your cab doing up against these railings? You are causing an obstruction."

These questions were promptly answered by the old gentleman in a sustained passage, supported by a soprano *obbligato* from the interior of the taxi. The "Special" listened judicially, and finally held up his hand.

"That'll do," he intimated, and turned to the taxi-driver.

"What have you got to say?"

The taxi-driver, having by this time cleared his larynx of cigarette-ash, shrugged his shoulders.

"Me? Oh, nothink! What I say don't matter. I'm a poor man: I don't count for anythink. That old garrotter only tried to murder me — that's all! Flew at me, he did, out of the middle of the road like a laughin' hyena, and nearly broke my neck, besides wreckin' my keb. But of course I don't matter. Let 'im 'ave it 'is own way. One law for the rich, and another —"

"Do you charge this gentleman with assault?"

interpolated the Special, who had evidently come to the conclusion that it was time to get down to the rigid official formula provided for such occasions as this.

"Charge 'im? And waste 'alf a workin' day at a blinkin' police court, waitin' for the case to come on? Not me!" replied the taxi-man, with evident sincerity. "Oh, no, I'm only a pore —"

"Constable, will you *please* tell this man to drive me to Half-moon Street?" demanded a high-pitched voice from the interior of the cab.

"I have no power to compel him to drive you anywhere, madam," replied the Special, with majestic humility.

"Well, what powers *have* you got?" shouted the old gentleman.

"At your request, sir, I can take his name and number, and you can charge him with declining to ply for hire when called upon to do so," chanted the limb of the Law. "Do you wish to charge him?"

"*Wish?*" shrieked the old gentleman. "Of course I wish! I mean" — as he met the cold and steady eye of the Special — "I shall be obliged if you will charge this man, officer."

"Very good," was the gracious reply. "Now I can *act*." The Special turned to the cabman, with pencil poised. "Your name?"

"Most certainly you shell 'ave my name!" retorted the other, with the air of a master-tactician who at last sees his opponent walk into a long-prepared trap. "*And* my number, too!

And you'll oblige me, Constable, by takin' *his* name and address as well. I don't intend for to —"

"Your name?" suggested the Special unfeelingly.

"Henery Mosscockle, Number Five-oh-seven-oh —"

Details followed, all duly noted. Then came the turn of the old gentleman. He proffered a visiting-card, and gave another to the cabman, who apologized for being unable to reciprocate, on the ground that he had left his card-case on the Victrola in his drawing-room. Our Three Musketeers, together with their D'Artagnan, were moved to audible chuckles. The old gentleman, aware of their presence for the first time, swung round and addressed them.

"American soldiers!" he exclaimed. "Good-morning, gentlemen. I am sorry that you should have witnessed such a poor specimen of British patriotism. None of that sort in your country, I'll be bound!"

Our friends saluted politely, and cast about for an answer which should be both candid and equally agreeable to all parties — not, when you come to think of it, a particularly easy task. But it was that ill-used individual, the taxi-driver, who replied. He thrust a bristling chin towards the old gentleman.

"Patriotism?" he barked. "As man to man, tell me — 'ow old are you?"

"That," snapped the old gentleman, "is my business!"

"Well," announced the taxi-driver, with the air of a man who has been awarded a walk-over, "I'm fifty-seven. Any sons?"

"Two."

"Two? Well, I got two too — one in the East Surreys and the other in the Tanks. ('E was a machine-gunner in the first place.) Both bin in the War four years. Both bin wounded. What are yours in? The Circumloosion Office, or the Conchies' Battalion?" [1]

"One is in the Coldstream Guards. The other was a Gunner, but he was killed."

The cabman became human at once.

"I'm sorry for that — sir! May I ask where?"

"First Battle of Ypres."

"Epray? That was where our Bert stopped his first one."

"I have a son too," interpolated the Special eagerly — "in the —"

But no one took any notice of him. The cabman and the old gentleman had entirely forgotten the existence of the rest of the party.

"Not badly wounded, I hope?"

"Nothing to signify — a couple of machine-gun bullets in the forearm. The second time was worser. That was at a place somewhere in the 'Indenburg line, spring of last year. 'En-in-'Ell, or some such name. Bert copped a sweet one that time — bit o' shell-splinter as big as me 'and. It was nearly a year before 'e was fit to go back. You see —"

[1] "Conchies," being interpreted, means "Conscientious Objectors."

But the old gentleman had laid an indignant hand on the other father's shoulder.

"You mean to tell me," he demanded, "that your son, twice badly wounded, has been sent back to the firing-line again?"

"I do. He's there now."

For the second time that day the old gentleman began to shake his fist.

"It's monstrous!" he shouted. "It's damnable! They did the same thing to my boy — my only surviving boy! It's this infernal system of throwing all the burden on the willing horse — this miserable cringing to so-called Labour!" He choked. "The Government . . . If I were Lloyd George . . ." He exploded. "*Pah!*"

"Never mind," said a soothing voice from the interior of the cab. "If he won't go, he won't. Besides, it's no use making him violent. I dare say I shall be able to get another taxi. Will you please open this door, Constable? It seems to have stuck."

The two parents stopped short, guiltily conscious of having strayed from their text. Al Thompson addressed the driver.

"Say, friend," he enquired, "ain't you got enough gas to take this lady where she belongs?"

"Gas?" The taxi-driver glared suspiciously.

"He means petrol," interpreted the Special.

"I got about an inch-and-a-'alf in me tank," replied the taxi-driver, half-resuming his professional air of martyrdom. "I been on this box since eight this mornin', and ain't 'ad a bite o' dinner;

but I'll take the lady anywheres in reason. She ain't *arst* me yet. I don't want to be disobligin' to nobody. 'Elp everybody, and everybody'll 'elp you! That's my motto. Give us a 'and, matey" — to Al Thompson — "and back my keb off the curb. Crank 'er up, Jock! Thanks! Good-mornin', all! Good-mornin', sir!"

"Good-morning!" called the old gentleman. "You have my card. Come and tell me how your sons are doing. Meanwhile I'll tackle those rascals. We'll get something done! Twice wounded! The same old story! Oh, criminal! Monstrous! Da —"

The cab rattled away, leaving the old gentleman to apostrophize His Majesty's Government. The Special, with the air of a man who has performed a difficult and delicate task with consummate tact, packed up his pocket-book and resumed his beat.

"And now," enquired the peevish voice of Joe McCarthy, "*Where do we eat?*"

They dined at a red plush restaurant somewhere off the Strand, and were introduced to some further War economies.

First, the waitress. By rights she should have been a waiter.

"Bin here nearly two years, now," she informed them. "The last man here was called up in March. Sorry for the Army if there's many more like him in it. Flat feet, something cruel. Anyhow, there's only us girls now."

"And varra nice, too!" ventured Andrew Drummond.

"None of your sauce, Scottie," came the reply, promptly, but without rancour.

"You're married, ma'm, I see," said Al Thompson deferentially with a glance at her left hand.

"Widow," said the girl briefly. "Since the Somme, two years ago."

"That's too bad," observed Al, painfully conscious of the inadequacy of the remark.

"Most of us has lost some one. In the house where my sister's in service there's three gone — all officers. I'm not one to ask for sympathy when there's others needs it more," replied this sturdy little city sparrow. "Carry on — that's my motto! He was in the Field Artillery: just bin promoted bombardier. Got any meat coupons?"

They shook their heads. As regularly rationed soldiers they were free from such statutory fetters.

"Better have bacon and eggs," announced Hebe. "They're not rationed." She dealt them each a slice of War bread. Butter they found was unobtainable; so was sugar. Andrew suggested that the party should solace itself with beer; but his companions, like most Americans, whether of the dry habit or the wet, preferred to drink water with their actual meals. The fact that the water when served was tepid received due comment from Joe McCarthy.

"That's the way folks always tak' it here," explained Andrew. "I dinna often drink it mysel', I canna see what other kind o' water ye could expect."

"You could put ice in it," grunted Joe.

"Ice?" The Scottish soldier explained the omission with elaborate tact. "In this country," he pointed out, "ice is no obtainable in the summer-time. We are situated here in the Temperate Zone, and if a body needs ice, he has tae wait till the winter for it. Oot in Amerikey I doot ye'll be able tae gather it all the year roond. Aye! I couldna fancy iced watter mysel'. It must be sair cauld tae the stomach."

Ice being unobtainable, it was obviously futile to ask for ice-cream. Sweet corn the waitress had never heard of: the mention of waffles merely produced an indulgent shake of the head. However, a timid enquiry for pie — after Andrew had amended the wording to "tart" — was more successful. It was obvious War-pie, but it satisfied.

"And," enquired their conductor, as they shouldered their way, full-fed, into the Strand, "where are you boys for now?"

They were bound, it seemed, for a great Ball Game between the American Navy and Army, at a place called Stamford Bridge. This was outside the ken of Andrew Drummond, but a policeman directed their attention to the Underground Railway System of London.

Presently they found themselves at the great football ground, converted for the time being into American territory. It is true that King George himself sat in the Grand Stand, surrounded by Generals, Admirals, and Councillors. It is true that thousands of British soldiers, sailors, and

civilians lined the ground, and that British brass bands made indefatigable music. But it was America's day. From the moment when the teams lined up, and the two captains were presented to the King by an American Vice-Admiral and an American Major-General, the proceedings were controlled by the fans and rooters of the American Navy and Army.

How far the British contingent followed the intricacies of the combat it is difficult to say. When Al Thompson pointed out a sturdy but medium-sized player, and announced that he had once been a Giant, Andrew Drummond merely wondered vaguely why he had shrunk. When another player was uproariously identified as a late Captain of the Red Socks, the English spectators mentally registered the Red Socks as some obsolescent Indian tribe — like the Blackfeet.

But you cannot, as has been well said during this War, remain neutral on a moral issue. Within twenty minutes every one on the ground was shouting "Attaboy!" or consigning the umpire to perdition, or endeavouring to imitate the concerted war-songs of the rival sides. When the sailors won the game by a narrow margin every soldier present, American or British, lamented to heaven.

"This is the End of a Perfect Day, I guess," remarked that most satisfactory guest, Al Thompson, as the trio made their way arm in arm along the crowded Strand in the cool of the evening. "What do you say, Ed?"

"Sure!" replied Mr. Gillette. "Fine!"

"You all right, Joe?" enquired Al.

The carper made no reply, but looked about him with a dissatisfied air.

"Seems to me," he remarked querulously, "that this War ain't such a fierce proposition as folks made out. Look at these people all enjoying themselves."

"Well, I guess they done their day's work," said Gillette pacifically. "Besides, most of them are in khaki — or else that hospital uniform" — as a string of *char-à-bancs* conveying convalescents to the theatre rattled cheerfully past.

But the misanthrope would not be denied.

"These here wounded don't appear to be wounded so bad," he grumbled. "You don't never see no seriously wounded men in the streets of this town."

"No," rapped out Al Thompson, ruffled for once, "and you don't see no dead laying around neither! I guess if you was to take a walk through a hospital, Joe McCarthy — No, you can cancel the hospital. This will do."

They had reached Charing Cross Station. From the farther gate streamed a slow-moving procession of loaded Red Cross ambulances. Another procession, empty, was moving in at the nearer gate, to disappear inside the station. Down an adjacent street stretched a line of more ambulances, and more yet. But the busy crowd in the Strand gave little heed to the spectacle. They had witnessed it, or could have witnessed it, at this hour

and in this place, among others, any evening during the past four years.

Our friends halted, waiting for an opening in the close-moving stream. Presently it slowed down and stopped, and Joe McCarthy led the way across. But he paused curiously, as did the others, at the open back of an ambulance, and peered in.

The car contained four passengers. Each lay very still upon his stretcher — two upon the floor, and the other two packed neatly on shelves overhead. All were rolled up in brown Army blankets. From the end of one of these protruded a heavily splinted and bandaged foot. Another man had his arm strapped across his chest. The third lay on his face, his back torn by shrapnel. The fourth lay on his back. His head was swathed in bandages, and only one eye was visible. It was closed. One hand was bandaged; the other clasped to his bosom a German sniper's helmet.

As they gazed, another figure edged in beside them — a London flower-girl, in the usual dilapidated shawl and deplorable hat, with her fragrant stock-in-trade clasped in the hollow of her left arm. She plucked a couple of pink carnations from a bundle, and flung them to the man with the bandaged head.

"For you, ole sport," she announced, "with my love. So long!"

The wounded man opened his visible eye and smiled his thanks; and the girl was passing on to the next ambulance, there to squander more of her sole means of livelihood, when a hand of iron fell

upon her shoulder. On the defensive in a moment, she whirled round.

"Nar, then! You stop pawin' me! I never done no —"

But Joe McCarthy, misanthrope, merely deprived her of the bundle of pink carnations, placing in her grimy palm in exchange all the money he happened to have with him. It was roughly three days' pay — no mean sum in the most highly paid Army in the world. Then leaning into the ambulance, which had begun to move again, he deposited the flowers beside the wounded soldier, and said gruffly:

"Say, Tommy!"

The solitary eye opened again, and a voice replied:

"Tommy yourself! I'm from Elizabeth, New Jersey. We're all Doughboys in here."

The Three Musketeers, thrilled to the core, broke into a trot, and panted:

"You don't say? Where you been fighting?"

"Place called Belleau Wood. Good-night, boys!"

It was their first contact with actuality.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE PROMISED LAND

We have now discovered France. Our first impression of that fair but voluble land is one of amazement that the inhabitants should be able to speak such a difficult language so fluently. Even the children can do it.

Later, we modified that opinion — either because we found that the French tongue was not so difficult as we had imagined, or more probably because we had learned that in France a knowledge of French is not so indispensable — at any rate, in war-time — as we had imagined. Indeed, we found the French language quite as intelligible as some of the English rural dialects. Contrariwise, the French appeared to understand our mode of expression much more readily than some of our English hosts.

For instance, if you ask an English railway porter for such a simple thing as the check-room or the news-stand, he will simply gape at you; whereas, if you stride into a French country hotel and hold up one finger — naturally one has to employ gesture just a little with the Latin races — and say "Oon room!" in a firm voice, the proprietor will comprehend at once, and smilingly hand you a key right away. One can only ascribe this instant sympathy to the freemasonry of a common democratic ideal. Or it may be that a

room is the only thing which a hotel proprietor could expect a stranger carrying a grip to ask for.

However, this by the way. The main point is that we are at last in France — France, the land of the Great Adventure, for which our ardent dreams and hard training have been shaping us for months past.

Still, at first sight it is not too easy to realize that we are there at all; for the surroundings in which we found ourselves on landing might have been lifted bodily from Hoboken.

Speaking of Hoboken, we note that the prevailing slogan of the moment, posted on barrack walls, painted on transport wagons, even blazoned in stencilled letters across the wind-shields of Staff automobiles, is: *Heaven, Hell, or Hoboken by Christmas!* To this pious aspiration one ardent spirit has added, in smaller lettering: *But let it be Hoboken, please, via Berlin!*

Certainly, the Armies of Invasion, both friendly and hostile, have transformed France, each in its own way. The Hun in the east has effected his share of the transformation in his own way, by fire, rapine, and pillage. But the British and Americans in the west have left a mark just as unmistakable and, it is to be hoped, more enduring. A great army cannot disembark upon the soil of another people's country without importing a great deal of its own personality at the same time. That accounts for the foregoing reference to Hoboken. The amount of portable property that we have brought with us is enormous. There were

days, not far distant, when a soldier subsisted upon the country wherein he found himself. During the Shenandoah Valley campaign Stonewall Jackson's men lived on unripe corn and green apples, for the very good reason that there existed no means of providing them with anything else. Throughout the centuries this fact has kept expeditionary forces down to reasonable numbers; the size of an army was limited to the capacity of the country to support it. But modern science has changed all that. Canned meat has revolutionized warfare far more surely and permanently than the aeroplane or the submarine. It is now possible, by modern methods of food preservation and transportation, to arm practically a whole nation and maintain it continuously and comfortably in the field thousands of miles from its base of supplies. That is why France is the most overcrowded and best-fed country in the world to-day.

Modern transportation has also made possible — which in warfare means indispensable — the intensive employment of heavy artillery. We use siege guns to-day where yesterday we employed eighteen-pounders and seventy-fives. That involves the construction of complicated railroad systems — tracks, sidings, locomotives, ammunition-wagons — all over the country, operating forward and sideways behind the line. Two years ago — twelve months ago — the spot where we find ourselves was a sleepy third-rate seaport, whose very existence was known to few English-speaking people, save the captains of Channel

coasters. To-day that port still slumbers in the Brittany sunshine, but it has thrown out an *annexe* many times larger than itself, comprising a complete system of docks and basins, two hundred and fifty miles of railroad siding, and enough storage accommodation to house two million tons of military supplies.

But American activity has not halted there. To secure a provision of fair drinking-water for the huge population of this mushroom city the Engineers have constructed a great reservoir among the foothills a few miles away — an enterprise which frankly astonishes the natives, to whom, in common with the rest of their countrymen, water as a beverage is unknown.

One other item — an inevitable item — swells the population of the district. This is the great American Base Hospital, which has been erected by the side of the main road leading inland from the coast. The hospital is a city in itself. Its buildings, cunningly isolated one from another, cover many acres, and contain twenty-four thousand beds. Thank God, these have never yet all been occupied at one time.

And this great base port is only one of several. That fact is borne in upon us at every turn by the prevalence of large printed signs, headed, *Race to Berlin!* which plaster the town. Upon these signs are printed in column down the left-hand side the names of all the base ports used by American troops — our own port among the number. At the opposite edge of the sign there is a great black

splash, marked BERLIN. The splash is connected to each of the base ports by a straight black line. On each line, at varying distances from the base ports, stands a small movable flag. The big idea, any passer-by will tell you, is to stimulate activity among the units forming the Service of Supply by means of healthy competition. Every good day's work in any port sets the flag of that port an inch or two nearer Berlin. A port is not called upon to compete with other ports (which would be manifestly unfair, for some are larger and better equipped than others), but only with its own previous record in the matter of unloading ships, and the like.

Attached to each diagram is a printed notice, pointing out in simple language that hard work at the base is just as indispensable as hard fighting at the front, and that when Victory comes the credit will be shared equally by both departments. The notice is signed *John J. Pershing*, and it has roused the dusky warriors at the various base ports to a fever of emulation.

Certainly there is much to unload. An army carries as much personal baggage as a prima donna. Observe these wharves. Here are great naval guns — fourteen-inch. They are like millionaires, because each requires a private railway train of its own. In fact they are super-millionaires, because each requires a private track as well. There are great motor-lorries, some from America, some from England. There is a fleet of rolling kitchens — or "soup-guns," as the Doughboy calls them —

awaiting horse-traction. At present they are hitched one behind another like a string of ducks, and are attached to a road engine for transference to the forward areas. There are mighty Mogul locomotives, shipped bodily from the United States, together with the appurtenances thereof — even that mysterious tolling bell on top of the boiler.

The American locomotive bell impresses Europeans enormously. They wonder what it is for. On the whole they regard it with reverence; it confers a sort of ecclesiastical sanctity upon American railroad travel. A Scotsman once told me that whenever he visited America he used frequently to wake up in the sleeping-car, standing in some great railroad junction in the small hours, under the firm impression that he was back in his native town on a Sunday morning.

As for the ordinary military stores, they come in one unceasing cataract. Gasoline tanks; water-tanks; cold-storage carcasses; bags of flour; canned meat; canned fruit; bales of clothing; consignments of tobacco; chewing-gum, books, and other comforts. Liberty motors; aeroplanes; machine guns; spare parts. The dingy, oddly painted ships come sliding down from the horizon, deposit them all in mountain ranges upon dock and wharf, then turn round and steal back to America for more.

Shells are not landed here. They are touchy and inflammable folk, and have a private and exclusive place of debarkation of their own, higher up the river.

But there is human freight to be deposited too.

Here are two liners, newly docked. Each, despite her great size, is heeling over towards the wharf, as the biggest ships will when the whole cargo hangs over one side. One cargo is white, the other coloured.

"Where yo' from?" shrieks a stevedore, to the dusky grinning human mountain above him.

"Seventy fo', Fo'teen Street, Lebanon, Illinois!" pipes a solitary voice far up the height, before any one else can answer the question. There is a roar of laughter at this egotism, and another voice from the wharf enquires:

"What camp?"

"Camp Dodge! Labour Battalion!" roars an answering chorus.

"Step right down, boys! We got lots of labour for you heah!" yells the humorist on the wharf.

The white contingent on the other ship proves to be from Camp Sherman. What is of far more importance, however, is the fact that both ships possess clean bills of health, only nine cases of sickness being reported altogether. This is good news, for influenza and pneumonia have been rampant. Troops on the great transports have been saddened of late by the continuous spectacle of eager young hearts committed to the deep without ever having beheld their Promised Land. There have been rumours, too, of hundreds of stretcher-cases landed in Liverpool from a single convoy. But apparently the plague is stayed. We shall have a chance now to be killed — which is a very different matter from dying like a common civilian.

In due course the gentleman from Fourteenth Street, Lebanon, Illinois, set foot upon the soil of France — to his own profound relief. His name was Joseph Williams. His calling, up to date, had been that of elevator attendant in the leading — in fact, the only — hotel in his native town. He had never been from home in his life, and when the long arm of the Selective Draft reached out from Washington, D.C., and pounced upon Joseph in Lebanon and dropped him into the maelstrom of Camp Dodge, it launched him upon a series of experiences so novel and so surprising that his eyes had never quite regained their sockets, nor had his mouth been completely closed, since. American negroes vary a good deal in tint, but there were no half-measures about Joseph. He was coal-black; and as his teeth and the whites of his eyes were china-white, he furnished a most effective colour-scheme. He was, moreover, a youth of cheerful countenance, and performed the most ordinary military duties with an air of rapturous enjoyment.

But the voyage across had been a severe trial. Joseph had never seen the ocean before, and his introduction to that element had not been auspicious. For fifteen long days the convoy had tumbled and lurched through the Atlantic wastes. The weather had been contrary; fogs numerous. The lame ducks of the party had been more than usually dilatory. Joseph and his brethren — possibly with some long-dormant ancestral chord of recollection astir within them — had been first scared, then demoralized, and finally had given

up hope. After the first week they abandoned all expectation of ever seeing land again. Late one night the officer on duty, going his rounds amid the Chinese opium-den of close-packed bunks in the ship's hold, overheard Joseph's voice, uplifted above the creaking of timbers and the snores of his associates, imploring Providence for the sight of "jus' one li'l' lone pine-tree — no mo' dan dat!" — as a divine guarantee that the deep waters of the Atlantic had not entirely submerged the habitable globe.

But now, Joseph had arrived. He was "right there." The sun shone warmly upon him, and the good brown earth lay firm beneath his large feet — the soil of France, which he had come to save. His smile expanded: his soul burgeoned. He would explore this town, and fraternize with the inhabitants.

Leave obtained, he set forth. He observed with approval, as a member of a family which had derived its income for generations from the taking-in of other people's washing, the elaborately starched and frilled caps of the Normandy fisherwomen. He returned with interest the shy smiles of little French girls in wooden sabots. When a bullet-headed little French boy in a long black pinafore stood to attention upon his approach and exclaimed, "*Américain, Salu-u-u-ut!*" Joseph Williams beamed from ear to ear.

Presently, emerging from the town, he made for the open country — a country of undulating sand-dunes, with here and there a windmill atop, fever-

ishly churning. To these succeeded green fields, dotted with humble farms and homesteads. Joseph observed that all these buildings were of stone or brick, wood being doubtless unobtainable in this sterile country. The inhabitants were not numerous — able-bodied men were conspicuously absent — and every one within sight appeared to be working. In the nearest field a small boy was directing the movements of two placid horses by means of that peculiar agonized howl with which a Frenchman always conducts business of an urgent nature, whether he be reviling a political opponent or selling evening papers. Farther away an oldish man in French Territorial uniform was cutting hay, assisted by two strapping young women.

Even the very old and the very young were employed. And in this connection Joseph stumbled upon the ideal occupation for persons who possess those twin adjuncts of the philosopher — a contemplative mind and a dislike for work.

Hitherto the summit of his ambition had been to stand one day in glorious apparel upon the tessellated flooring of a great New York hotel, opposite the elevators, and nod his head in Jove-like fashion whenever he thought it desirable that another elevator should go up. But now another and more restful career presented itself to him.

Every French peasant possesses a cow or two — peradventure half a dozen. To feed these, pasture-land is required. But no thrifty Frenchman would set aside valuable arable land for this purpose, when the roadside is free to all. A properly edu-

cated French cow can always be relied upon to extract a meal from the strip of dusty herbage that runs between the roadway and the ditch in every country lane in France. The trouble is that such a pasture is considerably longer than it is broad — three feet by Infinity is the dimension — and a cow of epicurean temperament may be inclined to wander too far, or even lose herself. Therefore, an escort must be provided — usually for each individual cow, for the collective convoy system is of little practical use here. So the Landsturm is called out. At early dawn Grandpère totters off up the road escorting, let us say, Rosalie; while Toinette, aged six, departs in the opposite direction, with the inevitable huge umbrella under one arm and Victorine's leading-string under the other. Thus the day is spent. It is a day without haste, without heat; for the pace is that of a browsing cow. Moreover, it is a day without supervision — grateful and comforting to an enlisted man of six months' standing — and its responsibilities are limited to steering the cow out of the way of approaching traffic, either by personal appeal from the shade of a neighbouring tree, or in extreme cases with the umbrella. It is not necessary to observe a course or take bearings: you may simply drift, because the cow always knows the way home. Decidedly, said Joseph Williams to himself, this was the life. Elevator-starting was a sociable and decorative calling, but made too severe a demand upon the faculties. After the war he would settle right here in France and chaperon a cow.

It was at this point that Joseph went finally to sleep, in the shadow of the cow which had started his train of thought. He awoke greatly refreshed — he had arrears of sleep to make up after the discomforts of the voyage — and set out for the town, with his mind a luxurious blank, except for two small matters. First, the entire absence of any suggestion of war. Joseph had half expected to find his landing disputed by the full strength of the German Army. Conversation on board had tended that way, and he had promised himself a happy hour writing home to describe how he, followed by his devoted adherents, had triumphantly overcome the foe's resistance. In fact, he had written the letter already. Second, every one in this country appeared to be white — French soldiers, French sailors, French civilians. He longed for the sight of one ebony face. Even a mahogany one would do.

And on the outskirts of the town the latter wish was gratified. A sudden turn in the road brought him face to face with his own double — or very nearly. The double was attired in what Joseph took to be a French uniform of some kind, the most conspicuous and enviable items of which were immensely baggy trousers and a red fez.

The double, after one glance at Joseph's modest khaki uniform and homely features, broke into a dazzling smile. The pair advanced rapidly upon one another and shook hands with enormous enthusiasm. Both broke into speech simultaneously.

Then befell the tragedy. Each spoke a tongue entirely incomprehensible to the other!

Each paused, incredulous; then, convinced there must be some mistake, began again. Then came another pause. A look of almost pathetic bewilderment appeared upon each honest countenance — countenances almost identical in shade and feature. Then Joseph exclaimed:

"Why, nigger, what so't of fancy nigger does yo' think yo' is?"

The gentleman in the fez retaliated with a query which, to judge by sound and intonation, was very similar to Joseph's.

The look of bewilderment on Joseph's face gave place to a severe frown, which was immediately reflected in that of his double. Each of these children of Ham now darkly suspected the other of imposture.

"Don' yo' go an' get fresh with *me*, nigger!" said Joseph, in a warning voice.

"*Yakki-wakki-hikki-doolah!*" growled the other — or words to that effect.

Joseph lost all patience. His voice suddenly shot up an octave higher, and he screamed:

"You ain't no nigger at all! You're only a Af'ican!"

Possibly it was in self-compensation for this disillusioning encounter that Joseph promptly mailed to his affianced in distant Lebanon, Illinois, the letter which has been mentioned above. It began:

Well, honey, we has arrived in France, and this war sure is fierce. Every time I steps outside my dugout I wades up to my knees in blood. . . .

CHAPTER NINE

THE EXILES

So tremendous was America's response when in the spring of this year the call came to her from the Western Front to hurry, so overwhelming the host which she sent over, that our chief difficulty to-day is not to withstand the Hun, but to find a vacant spot on his carcass to hit.

We have been in France for over a month now, but so far our services as a unit have not been required in the Line. But we are acclimatized by this time. The days of our green youth in the big camps back home have faded away as though they never had been. In this Old-World, constricted country it requires quite an effort of memory to recall those spacious days upon our own open, rolling plains and hillsides. Gone are the great streets of wooden two-storey huts, with their electric light, steam heat, and hot showers; the various social centres; the roaring Liberty Theatre and the Hostess House; the candy-stores and the shoe-shine parlours. They are but a memory, blurred by four months of incredibly novel experience.

To-day we sleep in French barracks — bleak, cheerless buildings, redolent of floor-soap and white-wash; or in billets up and down a little village; or in some great barn, on straw, or under the summer stars in our dog-tents. We perform our ablutions in the open air, mainly at a farm pump or street hy-

drant, to the diversion of the female population. For recreation we still play baseball; for creature comforts we can turn to the Red Cross, or the Y.M.C.A., or the Knights of Columbus, or the Salvation Army, or the Jewish Welfare Board. There is also a French institution, known as *Le Foyer du Soldat*, where we consort with grave-faced, courteous *poilus*. We have encountered no British troops so far. They are farther north: several of our units have gone up to be brigaded with them.

So here we are — right here in France — absorbing new atmosphere through our pores. We are on a strict war footing, too. Everything, as the Colonel has explained to us, must be "just so." If you are ordered to be at a certain cross-road ten miles away, with your company, at 9 A.M. to-morrow morning, with picks and shovels and two days' rations, you have to be there — just there — not at 9.05, with picks but no shovels, or with one day's rations instead of two, but at 9 precisely, with the exact outfit prescribed. The accomplishment of this feat is not so easy as it sounds: it involves much study, and occasional weariness of the flesh. You must be able not only to read a map correctly, but to visualize from a scrutiny of the same the exact nature of the country through which you are going to lead your company — whether it is hilly or no; whether the hill runs up or down; whether there are grade crossings or narrow bridges or one-way roads to be considered; whether a ford marked "Passable for troops" is also passable for the

wheeled transport which carries your picks and shovels. All these possibilities make for delay — sometimes most excusable delay. But excuses are not accepted in war-time. Either you succeed or you fail: there is no intermediate stage. Boone Cruttenden's plan — and a very good one too — is to try experiments, not upon his men, but upon himself. In his spare moments he is accustomed to figure out, with the aid of the map and a mekometer, how long it would take a body of armed men to cover some given distance on the map, having regard to the possibility of —

(1) Unexpectedly heavy going.
(2) Roads blocked by other troops.
(3) Having to scatter or take cover, owing to enemy aeroplanes.
(4) The cussedness of transport mules.
(5) Other visitations of Providence.

He then enlists the services of a friend — usually Jim Nichols — and the pair proceed to test their own theories by performing the journey in person, at the pace of a marching company, correcting their calculations as they proceed. It is upon such painful foundations that your true soldier is built up.

And discipline is rigid. If the top sergeant instructs Mr. Joe McCarthy to empty certain buckets of kitchen garbage, and that right speedily, Joe no longer explains that he is here not to empty garbage, but to make the world safe for Democracy. He simply departs with the buckets, somewhat dazed at his own alacrity. War has her victories, no less than Peace.

Saluting is universal now. We take a pride in it. Formerly we did not. Our independent natures rebelled against its suggestion of servility. But we have recently realized that a slave is a man who bends his knee and bows his head. A soldier does neither. He holds himself erect, looks his brother in arms straight in the face, and exchanges with him the proudest of all masonic signs.

We are much interested in the saluting methods of our Allies. The Frenchman salutes with the open hand, palm forward and fingers pointing upward. The Britisher brings his elbow into play, and salutes with horizontal forearm. Both French and British officers salute in different fashion from their men.

The British practise strange refinements of their own. Bond, the stout medical Major whom last we met travelling in a railway compartment from Liverpool, — yes, we may as well divulge it; it was Liverpool, — was one of the first Americans to make a serious attempt to grapple with the fundamental laws of the subject. Almost immediately on arrival he was sent to Belgium, with other members of the craft, to render invaluable assistance at a British Casualty Clearing-Station not far from Ypres — that graveyard of British soldiers and German hopes. He observed with approval the punctilious, if complicated, fashion in which all ranks greeted one another in public places, and set himself to take notes and master the combination. Two months later, a prey to overstrain, he took a week's leave in Paris, where he encountered

that eccentric but companionable Anglo-American, Major Floyd.

They exchanged greetings and news. Floyd, it seemed, was now attached to the American Army, having been appointed a liaison officer. Then Bond said: "Floyd, I am glad I met you. You are one of the most lucid exponents of British institutions in captivity, and I want you to explain to me just half a dozen or so of the most common variations of the British military salute."

Floyd nodded sympathetically.

"I know," he said. "It seems complicated, but all you have to do is to get hold of the fundamental idea. Here it is. The one thing a British soldier must never do is to remove his cap."

"Why?"

"If he takes it off, he is 'improperly dressed'; and that practically disqualifies him from 'getting on with the war' for the time being. So he remains covered, indoors and out, except in church and during certain portions of the burial service. In fact, at moments of ceremonial intensity, such as the playing of the National Anthem, when civilians are reverently baring their heads, the soldier has to grab his cap and put it on quickly."

"Otherwise he cannot come to the salute?"

"Cannot? Must not! It is a military crime to salute bareheaded. It says so in the book."

"I see," said Bond musingly. "That accounts for the fact that if I happened to meet a hospital orderly around the Casualty Clearing-Station without his cap, he never saluted me?"

"Precisely."

"Then why —" Bond hesitated.

"I know your trouble," said Floyd, fixing his melancholy gaze upon the Major's puzzled face. "Instead of saluting you, he gave you a glare of withering contempt?"

"He certainly did. But how did you know?"

"Because that was what it looked like — to you. In reality the poor fellow was only doing what the Book says. He was turning his head 'smartly towards the officer, while passing.'"

"That explains quite a lot. I was afraid it was I who was in wrong in some way, and he wanted to tell me so, but was prevented by the bonds of discipline from doing more than give me a good fierce look."

"His proceeding was perfectly regular," said Floyd gravely. "But that is not all. A British soldier is debarred from saluting not only when bareheaded, but whenever he is occupied in such a manner as to prevent him doing the thing in proper style. For instance, if you meet Tommy carrying a bucket or riding a bicycle, he merely gives his celebrated head-jerk, without employing his hand at all."

"That is a good notion," said Bond. "I shall adopt it. Last week I was riding a bicycle myself, and I nearly broke my collar-bone through letting go with one hand in order to salute a Brigadier-General in a muddy lane. Luckily I fell soft!"

"It's a carefully thought-out system," agreed Floyd, "and perfectly sound. Nearly everything in

the British Drill Book is — so far as it goes. In nineteen fourteen that Drill Book put into the field the finest army that has ever fought under the British flag. Unfortunately very few of the nation had read it. When the War broke out there were still some forty millions of us who regarded it as a purely humorous publication. If they had listened to Lord Roberts and absorbed its gritty contents, instead of lapping up predigested pap from the politicians, perhaps there would have been no War. Anyway, some of my best friends would have been alive today. Those were the fellows, Bond! In the First Battle of Ypres three divisions of them, dead beat after eight weeks' continuous fighting, stopped four fresh German Army Corps. The Drill Book taught them how to do that. They have mostly gone West now; but I for one will salute their memory so long as I live, cap or no cap!"

We are marching up the Loire now, getting nearer the front of things every day. Nantes is behind us — an ancient city astride the river, its historic quays crowded with American shipping and its wharves piled high with the products of those two mighty Allied bases, Chicago and Minneapolis.

The Loire is a pleasant stream. It is neither so broad as the Mississippi nor so deep as the Hudson, but it will serve. Shoals and sand-bars are frequent upon its surface, but on the opposite side the bank rises up to a quite respectable height, pleasantly reminiscent, at one or two points, of the Palisades.

And the towns we pass through are fascinating.

For one thing, they come upon you suddenly. American towns absorb you gradually. First an outlying suburb, with maybe the terminus of the street-car system. Then an untidy No Man's Land, neither cultivated nor inhabited — mainly vacant building lots — decorated along the route with huge advertisements, chiefly of automobile accessories. Here and there you pass a gasoline station or roadhouse. After that, by degrees, trim white wooden houses, with shady piazzas; increasing traffic; and finally, fifteen-storey office-buildings, shops, hotels, and the roar of the town.

But in Central France these premonitory symptoms are lacking. Your company tramps along the winding road beside the river, through country cultivated to its last yard — a country of hedges and ditches and enclosed fields. A bend in the stream, and lo! before you rises a venerable city, piled up on the ground rising from the river, with ancient bridges spanning the stream and a grey cathedral crowning the whole. There are no suburbs, no advertising boards, no gasoline stations. The sea of green turf continues to the edge of the city, and very often laps against ramparts a thousand years old. You march in under the resounding arch of an ancient gateway.

The streets are narrow; the gradient is frequently such as to discommode any one save a native of Lynchburg, Virginia. The shops are small, and the proprietors thereof appear to transact most of their business upon the doorstep. The inhabitants are friendly, especially the children. But most welcome

sight of all, wherever we march, and through whatever town or village we pass, there are familiar greetings awaiting us, in the form of signs over doorways or at street-corners, thus — *A.E.F. Commanding General's Headquarters;* or, *To A.P.M.'s Office;* or, *American Red Cross Headquarters.* And at each street-crossing, upright, sunburned, and immensely alert, stands an American Military Policeman, directing the tide of country carts, errant cows, antediluvian street-cars, despatch-riders, motor-cycles, and marching troops, with all the solemn austerity of a New York Traffic Cop.

If the American soldier has one characteristic which singles him out from the rest of the Allies, it is that Home is seldom absent from his thoughts — possibly because he is farther away from home than any one else. It is true that more water rolls between, say, France and Australia, than between France and America. But then to the Australian England itself is Home. In his own land he still refers to her as such. The true exile in this war is the American-born Doughboy. In most cases he has never been outside his own great and beautiful land before, for the simple reason that he has always found abundant elbow-room therein; and if the desire to roam has ever possessed him, he has been able to gratify it without stepping off the soil of his country or even beyond the border of his own State. Therein he is in different case from the inhabitants of those congested islets, Great Britain and Ireland, many of whose younger sons are thrust out in early life by the concomitant forces of natural increase

and external pressure from the land of their birth to seek a living in distant portions of the globe — and in so doing have quite inadvertently created that unmethodical, loosely connected organization known as the British Empire, which is either a federation of free communities, providing decent government where otherwise there would be no government at all, or else a voracious octopus, according to the way you look at it.

But the American soldier, being for the most part familiar with no country but his own, adapts himself less happily to foreign conditions than Britons who have been schooled by stern necessity to make themselves equally comfortable in Wei-Hai-Wei or Wigan. Add to this the natural outspoken American affection for, and belief in, American institutions and mode of life, and you will understand why American troops on the march through Europe will cheer themselves hoarse at the sight of such reminders of Home as an American policeman directing the traffic in a French town, or an imported American locomotive puffing along a French railroad.

And there is one other American institution for which the American soul thirsts in this barren land — the American newspaper. Behold us billeted for a day or two in the little town of Crapaudville-sur-Loire. Existence there is a series of *queues*. In the morning we arise right early and make a careful toilet. For this purpose we form a *queue*, or waterline, at the town pump. This is not a lengthy business, because it does not take long to fill a pannikin

with water: the only interruptions which occur are due to natural gallantry, as when an attractive Ally arrives to fill her family kettle. After that comes breakfast-time, which entails standing in another *queue*, or chow-line. After that as many of us as can contrive to do so hurry off to stand in the most important *queue* of the day — the news-line. A train from Paris, of arthritic tendencies and irregular habits, is due about noon, bearing newspapers, which are doled out at a price of twenty-five centimes.

There are, of course, sharp degrees of comparison. The great Paris morning journals are nothing in our young lives. They are written in a language which we do not know, and their headlines are lacking in enterprise. The Paris issue of the *London Daily Mail* is better. It reaches us in the form of a special American edition, which caters generously to our national predilection for type several inches high. But beyond that it does not go. *Blossom and blossom and blossom, but never the promise of fruit!* The reading matter below the headlines is constrained, lacking in pep — dead stuff. At least, so Joe McCarthy says. The Paris editions of the *New York Herald* and *Chicago Tribune* furnish more nourishment, although in these days of paper famine they are sadly attenuated affairs — mere single sheets, sometimes. Then there is our own A.E.F. weekly — *The Stars and Stripes*. It is ably conducted and full of meat; but at the best it is only an official publication, mainly about the War. And it was not printed in America. What we crave for is home

news — home gossip — home advertisements. A single copy of an American Sunday newspaper, with comic supplement complete, would fetch its weight in dollar bills over here. Our spirits yearn to participate once more in the Bringing up of Father, or the fratricidal rivalries of Mutt and Jeff; or to witness the perennial discomfitures of those two intensely human impostors, Percy and Ferdy. Even those nasty little Boche abortions, the Katzenjammer Kids, would be something.

The happiest man is he who receives once in a while a copy of his local newspaper from home. These come rarely enough, for second-class mail matter is incurring mysterious casualties these days.

However, one of these priceless packages arrived not long ago for Eddie Gillette, all the way from a little town in the Northwest. Eddie tore off the wrapper, and almost set his teeth into the paper. Everything was there for which his soul hungered — news about America, about his own town, about people whom he knew personally — conveyed by means of the arresting headline, the pointed phrase, and the intellectual pemmican of the heavily leaded summary. The War news, of course, was weeks old, but Ed devoured it rapturously. He knew now how the War was really going.

"This guy Allenby must be some dandy fighter," he observed to Al Thompson, looking up.

"Sure, Ed!" replied Al pleasantly. "Why?"

"He's been doing fine in the Holy Land. See what it says here."

Ed held up the newspaper for Al to see, and pointed to the head of a column:

BRITISH CRUSADERS IN NAZARETH

ALLENBY WINS JESUS CHRIST'S HOME TOWN FROM TURKS

"That's the goods!" remarked Ed approvingly, as he folded the paper with reverent care and tucked it inside his shirt. "The feller that writes that stuff has gotten the real idea for a story. The others over here" — designating apparently the editors of the London *Times* and Paris *Matin* — "ain't got nothing *to* them. No, *sir!* They don't write nothing but small-town stuff!"

"You said it, Ed!" agreed Al.

"All the same," observed the critic, rising and stretching his giant limbs, "this yer reading the papers from home may give a feller a grand and glorious feeling, but it makes him feel mighty lonesome and homesick too." He raised a pair of great fists heavenward. "Oh, *Boy!* when I get back home after this War, if the Statue of Liberty ever wants to see Ed Gillette again, she'll have to turn around to do it!"

CHAPTER TEN

S.O.S. TO DILLPICKLE

To most of us hitherto the letters *S.O.S.* have signified calamity of some kind — appeals for succour from sinking liners, and the like. Our British liaison officers, too, tell us that S.O.S. is the epithet applied to the rockets which are always kept in position in British front-line trenches, to be discharged as an urgent intimation to the gunners behind that the enemy are attacking in mass.

But in the American Army S.O.S. means "Service of Supply." It denotes, not panic, but order, and control, and abundance. It covers the whole chainwork of activity known in most armies as the "Lines of Communication." The town where we find ourselves to-day is a great S.O.S. centre. On its outskirts lie mushroom cities of huts and sheds. Here is a great cold-storage depot: there are eight thousand tons of frozen beef in this single building. Here is a big station for assembling aeroplanes, where de Haviland planes of British design are being fitted with Liberty engines. Through the town itself there flows by night and by day a never-failing stream of food and munitions and replacement troops. Needless to say the town lies upon one of the main roads along which the Race to Berlin is being run.

Back along that road, alas! streams another current — a counter-current — of wastage, mate-

rial and human. Upon its surface is borne all the dreadful litter of the battle-field — rusty rifles, damaged equipment, blood-soaked uniforms. Here is a mighty depot, which handles and repairs such wreckage. These buildings have all been constructed within the past few months. It would take you half a day to walk through them. In at one end of the establishment goes a squalid torrent of torn clothing, unmated shoes, leaky rubber trench boots, odds and ends of equipment. In due course, after a drastic series of laundering, sorting, patching, stitching, or vulcanizing experiences — mainly at the hands of a twittering army corps of Frenchwomen — each item in this melancholy jumble finds itself reincarnated in various storehouses in the form of properly assorted pairs of boots and shoes, neat second-hand uniforms, and complete sets of equipment. Nothing is wasted. Stetson hats damaged beyond repair are cut up into soles for hospital slippers. Uniforms too badly ripped for decent renovation are patched, dyed grass-green, and issued to German prisoners.

There are some thousands of these prisoners, with more coming. When they arrive, their prevailing tint is grey. Their uniforms are grey, by nature; their knee-high boots are grey, with dust; their faces are grey, with exhaustion and grime. These human derelicts are submitted to very much the same process of restoration as the damaged uniforms and equipment. They are paraded, stripped, and marched into the first of a series of renovation chambers. They pass under hot show-

ers; they spend a salutary period in what is delicately described as the "delousing chamber"; they are then provided, first with underwear, then with shoes, then with one of the grass-green uniforms aforesaid, and finally with a cooking and toilet outfit. They are shaved and their hair is cut; they are medically examined; they are card-indexed; a register is made of their trades; they are housed in comfortable wooden huts within a great barbed-wire enclosure; and within a few days they are at work upon whatever tasks they happen to be best qualified for, earning twenty centimes a day. They are fed upon the rations of American and British soldiers, including white bread — the only white bread in Europe.

Perhaps some of them, before they came here, saw the Allied prisoners in Germany — starved, robbed, beaten, and forced to work in salt-mines or shell-areas until death made an end of their afflictions. These languishing grass-green captives must bless the Geneva Convention, and marvel at the uncultured folk who still stand by its provisions.

A camp of German prisoners practically runs itself. Fritz knows when he is well off. There is no insubordination. Men come rigidly to attention when an officer passes. The routine work is supervised by German sergeants. In this particular camp you may enter one large hut and behold some fifty German prisoners engaged upon clerical work connected with camp administration — ration indents, card-indexes, and the like. It is a task after the German heart. Each prisoner is

absorbed in his occupation. He can hardly bring himself to rise to his feet when the door is thrown open for the Officer of the Day, and *Achtung!* is called. His pig's eyes gleam contentedly behind his spectacles. And well they may! A German delivered from the German Army and permitted to sit all day and make a card index of himself may be excused for imagining that he has got as near Heaven as a German is ever likely to get.

"When this War is over," observes Mr. Joe McCarthy, gazing meditatively through the barbed wire, "I guess someb'dy will have to chase these ducks back to Germany with a gun!"

Frenchwomen are not the only representatives of their sex in the American Expeditionary Force. There are hundreds of American women too, from every walk of American life. There are the hospital nurses, the stenographers, the telephone operators, the motor-drivers — all duly enrolled members of the Regular Service. Then there are the women of the Auxiliary Forces — the Red Cross, and its sister organizations — all doing a man's share, and something over. Their work is not supposed, of course, to take them up into the battle zone. They serve at the Base, or on Lines of Communication. But in these days of Big Berthas and promiscuous bombing raids, no one is safe. The battle zone is the extent of ground which an aeroplane can cover, as the inhabitants of London know to their cost. Some of the worst devastation in France may be witnessed at certain British hos-

pital bases on the French coast, miles from any battle-line.

Still, women have been known to find their way into the Line. As some student of nature has told us, "It is hard to keep a squirrel off the ground."

One summer morning an old acquaintance of ours, Miss Frances Lane, and her crony, or accomplice, Miss Helen Ryker, came off night duty at their hospital and sniffed the fresh air luxuriously. They had twelve hours of complete freedom from responsibility before them — a circumstance not in itself calculated to correct Miss Lane's natural lightness of ballast.

In most hospitals nurses coming off night duty are not unreasonably expected to spend at least some portion of the following day in bed. But youthful vitality, abetted by summer sunshine and a martial atmosphere, make a formidable combination against the forces of common sense. This particular hospital was only thirty miles from the Line. On still days the turmoil of the guns could be heard quite plainly.

After breakfasting, Miss Lane took her friend by the elbow and led her to the great military map on the wall, with the position of the battle-line clearly defined upon it by an irregular frontier of red worsted, and said:

"Helen, listen! Just where are we on this little old map?"

Miss Ryker, who possessed the unusual feminine accomplishment of being able to read maps and railroad time-tables, laid a slender finger-tip upon

the blue chalk-mark which designated the geographical position of the hospital.

"There," she said.

"And," pursued Miss Lane, in a low voice, "*where do we go from here?*"

Miss Ryker, who was a girl of few words, began to measure out distances with her finger and thumb.

"The nearest point to us," she announced at last, "is a place called Delficelles."

"Delficelles? Our boys captured it not long ago," said Frances in confirmation. "I guess the trenches must lie just beyond."

On one point she was right: Delficelles had been captured by an American Division a fortnight previously. On the other she was wrong, for a reason which will presently appear.

"We are going to visit them," continued Miss Lane.

"How do we get there?" enquired her practical friend.

Miss Lane looked stealthily round, as a precaution against eavesdroppers. Then she smiled seraphically.

"I guess we can do it on our faces," she remarked.

To get up into the Line — that tortured strip of territory, some five miles wide, which winds from the North Sea to the Alps, and within which two solid walls of men have faced one another for nearly four years — there are two recognized courses of procedure. One is to be a member of an

armed party — an Infantry Battalion, say, going up to take over a sector of trenches. There is no doubting the *bona fides* of such an excursion.

The other course is incumbent upon solitary individuals like despatch-riders and unchaperoned civilians. These must have a much-signed and countersigned pass. Even Staff Officers are not exempt from this law. That lesson was learned as far back as nineteen fourteen, when German officers, arrayed in the uniform of the British General Staff, kindly accompanied the British Army during the retreat from Mons and added to the already considerable difficulties of a hectic situation by directing troops down wrong roads and issuing orders of a demoralizing nature.

So now it is almost as difficult for an unauthorized person to get into the fighting area as into the Royal Yacht Squadron, or the New York Subway at 6 P.M. Mesdames Lane and Ryker were obviously neither an armed party nor chaperoned civilians. But young and attractive females have means of attaining their ends which are denied to the rest of creation. Ask not how the feat was achieved. Enquire not the names of the susceptible lorry-drivers who succumbed, nor of the tall young military policeman at Dead Dog Corner who melted incontinently beneath the appeal of Miss Lane's blue eyes. Let it suffice that by early afternoon our two runagates found themselves safely deposited in what was left of the village of Delficelles. (By the way, the local soldiery pronounced it "Dillpickle," so we will let it go at that.)

Having reached the haven of their desire, they found, to their extreme satisfaction and relief, that it seemed to be no part of any one's duty to turn them out. Indeed, such officers as they encountered punctiliously saluted their uniform, while the rank and file addressed friendly and appreciative greetings to them. One enthusiast produced a pocket camera, and insisted upon performing a ceremony which he described as "spoiling a film" upon the precious pair.

The village itself lay in a hollow behind a low ridge, and was in what may be described as moderate ruins. One learns to make these distinctions in the shell-area. Roughly, there are three grades. Villages whose roofs are riddled by shrapnel and whose windows have ceased to exist, but whose walls are still standing, may be regarded as practically intact, and are much sought after as places of residence. At the other end of the scale come the villages which were deliberately obliterated by Brother Boche during one of his great retreats. There are many such in the neighbourhood of Bapaume and Péronne. To-day not one stone of these remains upon another. Not a tree is to be seen. It is only by accepting the evidence of the map that you are able to realize that you are in a village at all. The main street runs between high banks, overgrown by weeds and nettles. If you part these and look underneath, you will find a subsoil of brick rubble.

At the cross-roads in the centre, where once the church stood, you will find a military sign-board

giving the map-reference of the village, followed perhaps by a postscript, thus:

> Z.17.c.25.
> THIS WAS
> VILLERS CARBONNEL

Fuit!

The village of Dillpickle occupied an intermediate position between these two extremes. Some of the houses were standing; others were merely a pile of disintegrated bricks and mortar. Where one of these ruins had overflowed into the street and obstructed the fairway, the *débris* had been cleared away and built up into a neat wall, guarding the sidewalk from further irruption. Such houses as still stood were inhabited, chiefly in the lower regions, by American artillerymen and the Infantry Brigade in reserve. The village was rich in German notice-boards — black stencilling on plain wood — announcing that here was the residence of the *Kommandant*, or here a shelter from bombardment for so many *Männer*, or that here it was *Verboten* for the common herd to go. Most of these were now pasted over with notices and orders in a different, and healthier, language.

Our friends collected a German notice-board apiece as a souvenir, and proceeded to ransack the village for further booty. Miss Ryker, who was domestically minded, gleaned two forks, a spoon, and some cups and saucers. Miss Lane,

caring for none of these things, appropriated a small mirror. Presently she announced:

"I guess we'll go up to the trenches now, Helen. They must be just over the hill, beyond that wood on the sky-line."

But Miss Lane, as already noted, was wrong. The trenches did not lie just over the hill, for the very good reason that there were no trenches. We have grown so accustomed during this War to employing "trenches" as a synonym for "battle-line" that we are apt to overlook the fact that it is possible to fight upon the surface of the earth. For a long time both the Allies and the Hun suffered from a disease called "Trenchitis," induced by an intensive experience of high explosive and machine-gun bullets. If a force wished to defend itself, it produced picks and shovels and dug itself in. If it wished to attack, it dug an advanced "jumping-off" trench in the dead of night, approached by saps and tunnels, and so made the open space to be covered in the assault as narrow as possible. This is a useful and economical way of fighting, especially when your troops are not sufficiently numerous to warrant prodigality. But it wastes much valuable time; and since the day when the entire American Nation was placed at the disposal of the Allies as a reinforcement, it has been found possible to employ other methods. Down South, on the Alsace-Lorraine front, where a lightly held outpost line runs for more than a hundred miles toward Belfort, trench warfare is still fashionable. But in the Argonne, where most of the fighting takes

place in closely wooded country, we remain more or less above ground, maintaining touch with one another as best we can by means of an irregular chain of grass-pits or fortified shell-craters.

So when our pair of truants reached the wood on the sky-line, and penetrated cautiously to the other side, they beheld no trenches.

At their feet the road dropped steeply into a little valley, filled with woods which ran right up the slope beyond and disappeared into a smoky mist on the opposite crest. The sun had not fulfilled its early promise, and had disappeared by noon. A small drizzling rain was beginning to fall.

Helen Ryker, who loved her personal comforts, drew her blue cloak more closely round her, and shivered.

"They don't have any trenches *here*," she announced, in aggrieved tones.

"They are in the woods down in the valley," Miss Lane assured her. "You can hear the firing."

You certainly could. Up to their ears from the undergrowth on every side rose the mutterings of warfare — solitary rifle-shots, and the intermittent pup-pupping of machine guns. Down in the valley, at the foot of the road, they could see a stream. The road had once crossed it by a bridge; but the bridge was now a ruin, and the road had been diverted so as to cross higher up, by some sort of pontoon.

Not a human being was in sight. One of the strangest characteristics of modern warfare — warfare in which millions of men are employed

where formerly hundreds sufficed — is the entire invisibility of the combatants. In these days of aeroplanes and magnifying periscopes no man ever makes himself more conspicuous than need be. A hundred years ago soldiers went into action in brightly coloured coats and flashing accoutrements. Now their uniforms imitate the colours of nature — the colours of grass and earth. Guns are painted to look like logs of wood. If a sniper wishes to do a little business from a tree-top or a thicket, he not infrequently paints himself green as a preliminary.

"It's lonesome here!" continued Miss Ryker.

"I expect we shall find the boys presently," replied the undefeated Frances. "My gracious, Helen, what was that?"

Over their heads — quite close, it seemed — sailed something invisible, with a weary sigh. It was a howitzer shell fired from an American battery five miles behind them. The sound of its passage ceased, but almost directly afterward a column of greenish-grey smoke spouted up from the wooded hillside opposite, followed a few seconds later by a heavy detonation.

Helen and Frances found themselves unaffectedly gripping hands.

"What is it?" asked Helen tremulously.

One of Miss Lane's most compelling characteristics was that she was never at a loss for an answer.

"That? That's artillery fire, I guess. That over there is the smoke of a big gun."

As usual, she was partially correct. What they

saw and heard was, indeed, artillery fire, but it was not the smoke of the gun, but the smoke of the shell bursting among the German machine-gun nests.

"German or American?" asked Helen.

"American, sure. Let's go on down this road, and see some more. It's a nice quiet road. There can't be any danger."

In the shell-area on the Western Front the fact that a road is quiet does not by any means guarantee that it is "nice." But the people who really enjoy war are those who have not been there before. The pair of adventurers set boldly off down the hill. As they started, a second contribution from the howitzer battery passed over their heads, with the lazy rustle which characterizes the descent of high-angle shells, and burst in the woods opposite, fifty yards to the right of the first.

"There's another gun firing!" exclaimed Miss Lane, clasping her hands rapturously. "My, but I'm excited! C'm along, Helen!"

They hurried down the road, observing with a pleasant thrill that the surface thereof was pitted with shell-holes. More experienced fire-eaters would have noted that some of these holes were of extremely recent origin — a few hours old, in fact. Once or twice they paused to collect more souvenirs — shell-fuses and empty cartridge-cases.

Distances viewed across a valley are deceptive, and their stroll down the road took longer than they expected. The rain was coming down harder than ever.

"We ought to hit those trenches soon," said Miss Lane.

"What are trenches like, anyway?" enquired Miss Ryker, a little peevishly. She was beginning to make heavy weather of the expedition under her cargo of crockery and expended ammunition.

Miss Lane, whose acquaintance with trench warfare had been derived mainly from the Movies, made no reply. She had stopped by the roadside to read a notice-board, nailed to what was left of a tree. It said:

This road must NOT *be used by troops during daylight.*

She nodded her head sagely.

"That's why there is no one around," she remarked. "What were you saying just now, Helen?"

Miss Ryker had discovered a fresh grievance.

"It seems to me that some of the firing has gotten *behind* us!" she said.

The girls stood still, and listened. A third American shell swung over their heads and burst in the woods opposite. Simultaneously came a sharp outburst of machine-gun fire from the right — the right rear, in fact.

"Maybe we have walked into a sort of bend in the line," suggested Frances. "They call it a salient," she added professionally. "Why, if there are n't some of our boys at last! There . . . crossing that bridge!"

She was right. As she spoke, two khaki-clad figures emerged from the woods upon the opposite side of the stream below them and trotted briskly

across the pontoon bridge, in single file a few yards apart. Once across, they joined forces, and began to climb the hill in a more leisurely fashion. But it was noticeable that instead of coming up the road they kept a course roughly parallel to its direction — perhaps a hundred yards away.

"Why should they go hiking through that mushy long grass, wetting themselves, when there is a good road right here? Are n't men just *children?*" observed Miss Ryker.

"Perhaps they don't know about the road," said Miss Lane charitably. "We'll call them. Oh — Boys!"

Her syren call had the desired effect — as well it might. The gentlemen addressed, both of whom were labouring up the slippery slope with bent heads, stopped suddenly, and looked about them. Next moment they were doubling heavily through the long grass in the direction of the road, making signals as they ran. They appeared agitated about something.

"Come off that road!" shouted one of them, who was leading by ten yards, to the two female figures in the mist. "*Quittez le chemin! C'est dangereux!* Beat it for here! *Dépêchez-vous!* As hard as you — well — I'll — be —" he swallowed something — "*Frances Lane?*"

With a final bound, Boone Cruttenden, with a steel helmet on his head, a gas apparatus slung on his chest, and acute fear in his eyes, landed squarely in the ditch; then scrambled out upon the road.

"Why — Boone?" began Frances affably. But,

a grasp of iron fastened on her arm just above the elbow, and a badly frightened young man proceeded to propel her, without ceremony, across the ditch and away from the road.

"You fetch the other one, Major!" he called over his shoulder.

"I shall be charmed," replied an unmistakable English drawl.

"Boone, listen!" protested Miss Lane breathlessly, as she was towed sideways across the hillside. "What are you — ?"

But her escort merely muttered to himself, as they ran:

"Can you beat it? Can you *beat* it?"

Presently, having placed a distance of more than a hundred yards between itself and the road, the panting convoy was permitted to halt.

"We will now continue our excursion up the hill," announced the English Major. "But we will keep off the road, if you ladies don't object. It is registered from top to bottom, you know."

"Just what does that mean?" enquired Miss Lane, whose natural curiosity was coming back with her breath.

"It means," replied the Major, removing a shining monocle from his right eye and wiping it with a khaki handkerchief, "that the Boche has the range to every yard of it. As he usually searches it with H.E. and shrapnel every few hours, it is healthier to keep on the grass when going up and down this hill. Are we far enough away now, do you think, Cruttenden?"

"Ye-es. But it would be better to split into two parties, I should say. Less conspicuous — eh?"

The Major readjusted his monocle, and replied solemnly:

"By all means. This young lady and I will extend another hundred yards to the left. Cruttenden, considering your tender years, you display a promising acquaintance with tactics. Also diplomacy. So long!"

So by force of tactical exigency, Frances Lane and Boone Cruttenden walked up the hillside in the rain together. Major Floyd and Miss Ryker were discernible in the failing daylight, keeping station on the left flank.

"Now, tell me!" Boone and Frances began together. Then they stopped. Boone smiled.

"Ladies first!" he said.

But for once Frances preferred to be a listener.

"No, Boone Cruttenden — you!" she said. "Tell me what you are doing here, anyway."

"I got a chance," explained Boone, "to come here with Major Floyd — he's our liaison officer with the British Mission back of the line — and have a look at this sector. The regiment may take it over next month. The Major knows the ground, and he took me down there" — he pointed backwards over his shoulder — "to see our advanced posts."

"Where are the trenches?"

"Trenches? There are none. This is open warfare. The Yanks and the Huns are mixed up together in those woods, watching one another like

cat and dog. We hold the stream, and some of the ground beyond. That pontoon bridge is covered by a concealed machine-gun post of ours, in case the Hun tries to rush it. It's probable he had direct observation on it: that is why the Major and I did not linger much as we came across. We're in a sort of pocket here. The German line bends around us. Some of their posts up in the woods have a clear view of the road, all the way up. Luckily visibility is bad to-day, or you might have been spotted. Now tell me what *you* are doing here!"

Frances told him — as much as she thought he need know.

"And where is your hospital located?" demanded Boone.

Miss Lane informed him.

"That is more than thirty miles back!" cried Boone.

"About that," agreed Miss Lane meekly.

"Does any one know you are here?"

"I hope not! I mean, no one — except you, Boone," replied Frances softly.

The conscientious Boone made a last effort to maintain a judicial attitude.

"Do you know you have committed a serious military offence?" he demanded fiercely. "Trying to get past sentries, and traffic police! Did you know that no women are allowed anywhere in the battle zone?"

"Yes," said Miss Lane demurely. "That was why we came — to break a record!"

"And do you know that all this valley is liable to be searched with gas, and you have no gas-mask?"

"I did n't know that," confessed the delinquent, "but I might have guessed it, I suppose. But I was dead tired of that old hospital, Boone, and I was just crazy to see the fighting!"

"Crazy? That's just the word. You crazy, crazy child!" said Boone affectionately. "Did n't you know the chances you were taking?"

"Yes," said Frances Lane. "But" — her eyes were raised to his for one devastating moment — "I knew I was safe the moment I saw *you*, Boone!"

"Oh, *Francie!*" murmured that utterly demoralized youth.

"And where are your headquarters located, Major?" enquired Miss Ryker brightly. The conversation had harped so far upon her own misdemeanours, and she was anxious to introduce a fresh topic.

"I live chiefly with the Division holding this sector," replied Major Floyd. "I am liaison officer."

"Don't drop those cups. Just what does a liaison officer do?"

"I act as bell-hop between the local British Mission and the Americans. I go around paging Generals and Staff Officers — and everything," replied the Major.

"There are no Generals here," Miss Ryker pointed out.

"No. To-day I am having a vacation. Boone Cruttenden's Division are in Corps Reserve near

by, so I undertook to bring him up here and give him his first view of the Line."

"How did you get here?" enquired Miss Ryker, who had not initiated the present conversation for nothing.

"On a Staff car."

"An automobile?"

"Yes."

"Where is it?"

"Behind that wood at the top of the hill."

"Then," announced Miss Ryker, coming to the point, "you will be able to give us two poor girls a ride home."

"It's — it's twenty-five miles out of our way," said Floyd feebly. "Besides, Boone and I have our reputations to consider. He is young, and might live it down, but think of me! People would say I was old enough to know better."

"Think of *us!*" countered Miss Ryker; "if we can't get back, and the Matron finds that Frances and I have been playing hookey!" She followed up her appeal by a faint sob.

Major Floyd dropped the teacups and raised his hands above his head.

"Kamerad!" he groaned.

Whoo-oo-oo-oo-UMP!

A long overdue shell from a German field battery came shrieking over the tree-tops behind them and landed squarely in the road, two hundred yards to their right.

"You're quite safe," announced the Major, patting four fingers which he had suddenly dis-

covered on the sleeve of his Burberry. "That one is too far away to hurt us. There will probably be more, but Fritz won't shell away from the road. His imagination is not elastic."

"What about Frances and Captain Cruttenden?" said Helen. "They are nearer the road than we are. Would that shell be able — ?"

Major Floyd rubbed his misty monocle and examined the two figures to his right.

"They don't appear to have heard it," he announced, and shook his head mournfully.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

THE LINE

Most of us in our extreme youth, before we leave home and adventure upon the Great Unknown of school life — the most formidable ordeal, by the way, that the majority of us ever have to face — endeavour to prepare ourselves for what we imagine lies before us by a course of study.

We devour stories about schools and schoolboys, with an application most unusual in the young. We have all the tenderfoot's fear of being considered a tenderfoot, so we take pains to acquire the schoolboy tone; schoolboy atmosphere; schoolboy slang. The exploits of the hero after he becomes "Cock of the School" — whatever that may be — and leads the football team to victory, are dismissed by us as too lofty and distant for our achievement. We are much more interested — more painfully interested — in his experiences as a freshman or fag. We endeavour to pick up tips as to what a boy entering school for the first time should do, and more particularly what he should not do, in order to avoid being tossed in a blanket or sent to Coventry, or labelled "sissy," or "cry-baby" — and all the other vague terrors which have kept prospective Cocks of the School awake at night since the dawn of Education.

This intensive course of self-preparation has one drawback. None of the things described in the

books ever happen at the school to which we are ultimately sent. We have plenty of surprises, plenty of rough experiences; but none quite of the kind anticipated.

American soldiers, arriving on the Western Front in the fourth year of the War, feel themselves in very much the same position as the self-conscious adventurer described above.

Ever since — in some cases, before — our country came in, we have been schooling ourselves for the day when we should find ourselves Over Here, among veteran soldiers. Methods have varied, of course. Some of us have followed every turn of the operations in official summaries and technical articles. To such, the War has been a glorified game, we will say, of scientific football. Others — Miss Sissy Smithers, for instance — have educated themselves upon more popular lines — from the Sunday newspapers, or illustrated magazines of the domestic variety, in which healthy patriotism and "heart interest" are not fettered by any petty considerations of technical possibility.

Over here, Disillusionment awaits both these enthusiasts. The student of tactics soon realizes the difference between fighting a battle in imagination and in reality. Imagination cannot bring home to any human brain the extent to which the chess-board dispositions of modern strategy are tempered by the actualities of modern fighting — in other words, by the strain upon the human machine. All the five senses are affected — hearing, by the appalling din; seeing, by the spectacle of a

whole group of human beings blown to shreds; smelling, by the reek of gas and explosives; touching, by the feel of dead men's faces everywhere under your hand in the darkness; and tasting, by the unforgettable flavour of meat in the mouth after forty-eight hours' continuous fighting in an atmosphere of human blood. The War is going to be won, not by the strategists, but by the man who can endure these things most steadfastly.

Miss Sissy Smithers need not be taken so seriously. He may be disappointed at first to find that Red Cross nurses follow their calling in Base Hospitals and not in No Man's Land; and that performing dogs, loaded with secret despatches and medical comforts, are not such a prominent feature of modern warfare as the lady novelist would have us believe. But no enterprise, however grim, was ever the worse for a touch of glamour. Sissy will soon settle down.

Still, we have come to school knowing more than most new boys — far more, indeed, than our seasoned French and British companions knew when they embarked upon their martial education. The American soldier takes the field to-day, thanks to the recorded experiences of others, with a serviceable knowledge of the routine of trench warfare. Gas is no surprise to him, and he is familiar with the tactical handling of bombs, machine guns, and trench-mortars.

Up to date, however, we have not by any means drunk deep of warlike experience, for the good reason that the authorities are breaking us in by

degrees. We are now in trenches, holding what is described as a quiet sector of the Line, recently taken over from the French, and hitherto very lightly held.

For the past two years, the Intelligence people tell us, the trenches opposite have been manned by only one German to every four yards of front. Eddie Gillette has already announced that when he has finished doing what he came out here to do the number of Germans opposite may be the same, but the method of distribution will be different. "Not one Dutchman to four yards," he explains, "but a quarter of a Dutchman to every one yard. Yes, *sir!*"

Every Army has its own system of conducting trench warfare, founded largely upon national characteristics. The Germans, it used to be said, hold their trenches with machine guns, the British with men, the French with artillery. Certainly in nineteen-fifteen, when stationary warfare was the order of the day upon the Western Front, the Germans kept few men in the front trenches — except perhaps at night — leaving the line very much to the protection of barbed wire and machine guns, the latter laid and trained in such a fashion as to create if need be a continuous and impenetrable horizontal lattice-work of bullets in front of every section of the line. The British, having at that time more men than munitions — a battalion was lucky if it possessed four Vickers guns and a single trench-mortar — filled their trenches with as many defenders as they would hold, and trusted, not

altogether vainly, to the old British tradition of rapid rifle fire and close work with the bayonet to keep the line intact.

The French temperament called for more elasticity than this. The one thing a Frenchman hates to do in warfare is keep still. He prefers active counter-measures to dogged resistance. So in nineteen-fifteen, whenever a sector of the French trenches was heavily bombarded, the garrison was promptly withdrawn to a position of comparative safety — where, the story goes, they seized the opportunity to cook an extra-elaborate dinner. If the Germans followed up their bombardment with an infantry attack, that attack was met mainly with an intensive barrage from that amazingly rapid and accurate piece of scrap-iron, the *soixante-quinze* field gun. When the German attack fizzled out, as it usually did, the incident ended, and the French infantry returned to their place in the line. But if it penetrated the barrage and occupied the French trenches, the Frenchman finished his coffee, adjusted Rosalie, his bayonet, and prized Brother Boche out of his new quarters.

But all that was in nineteen-fifteen. In warfare your best teacher is your opponent. Nowadays we have, on each side of No Man's Land, assimilated one another's methods. Moreover, trench warfare of to-day has developed into a fluid affair. For one thing, trench-mortars, tanks, and intensive artillery bombardments can make hay of the most elaborate defensive works. You can no longer surround yourself with barbed wire and go comfort-

ably to bed, secure in the knowledge that your opponent cannot possibly get at you without a long and laborious artillery preparation. In nineteen-sixteen, before the First Battle of the Somme, British and French guns pounded the German trenches night and day for three weeks. It was a great pounding, but it cannot be said that the subsequent attack came as a surprise to the enemy. Under such prolonged and pointed attentions even a German is apt to suspect that something is in the wind. But to-day we have other methods. Three minutes of pandemonium from massed trench-mortars — a rush of tanks — and your defences are gone and the Philistine is upon you.

So in nineteen-eighteen we live perpetually upon the *qui vive*, and our methods have been elaborated and standardized to the common measure of our joint experience. Our artillery has the whole front registered. At a given signal it can let down a barrage — a Niagara of shrapnel and high-explosive — upon the strip of earth that separates the enemy's front line from our own. This can be stationary, to annihilate an enemy attack, or "creeping," to form a protective screen for an attack of our own. We have machine guns too, set, *à la* Boche, at fixed angles to maintain a continuous band of fire along each line of our trenches — more especially along the second line; for it is a waste of life and energy to-day to treat the front trench as anything more than a close chain of outposts, screening the real dispositions behind.

And the rifle and bayonet have come back to

their own. Two years ago they were in danger of being discarded as obsolete. Every one was bomb mad. It was claimed that a rifle and bayonet are useless against an experienced opponent feeling his way along a zigzag trench in your direction. True; but a bomb is equally useless — or rather, equally dangerous — in the presence of an opponent rushing upon you in the open. So now we have adjusted our perspectives, and each device of war is put to its proper use.

So much for what the author of that little classic, "Dere Mable," would describe as "Tecknickle stuff."

Needless to say, we are burning to play with all these new toys simultaneously, like a small boy on Christmas morning. But we have had little opportunity so far. To vary the metaphor, we must eat up our bread and butter before we are allowed cake. We are busy at present learning trench routine. Taking over trenches from another unit, for instance. This is a complicated and exasperating pastime. It usually has to be performed in the dark; otherwise enemy aeroplanes might observe unusual activity behind our line, and advise their artillery to that effect. This involves much night-marching along roads pitted with shell-holes; and the trouble about a shell-hole three feet deep is that in wet weather it looks like a perfectly innocent puddle. Frequently, to avoid congested wheel traffic, we have to march across country in single file, under the leadership of a faltering guide. Not a light must be shown, not a word spoken. Each

man, loaded with rifle, equipment, gas apparatus, and a few extra and unauthorized comforts, has to follow the ghostly form of the man immediately in front of him. It is discouraging work, for the simple reason that if you set one hundred men to march in single file in the dark, though the leader may be groping his way forward at the rate of one mile per hour, the last man in the *queue* is always running, and *has* to run if he is not to be left behind. No one knows why this should be so, but the uncanny fact remains.

Once you have descended into the communication trenches it is less easy to lose yourself — unless the guide sets the example — but your progress becomes slower than ever. Possibly — probably — you meet a procession going in the opposite direction — a ration-party, maybe, or stretcher-bearers with their patient, cheery freight. The fact that they have no right to be there at all — practically all communication-trenches here are supposed to be one-way thoroughfares — makes matters no easier, though it affords relief in the form of argumentative profanity as you struggle together in the constricted fairway like stout matrons loaded with market-produce in a street-car.

Arrived in the actual trenches, the congestion is even greater, for now there are just twice as many men in the trench as it was constructed to hold, and the outgoing party must never budge until the incoming party have arrived and "taken over." Taking over is no mere formality either. Officers, machine-gunners, bombers, chemical experts, and

other specialists must seek out their "opposite numbers" in the gross darkness and take receipt in due form of ammunition, observation-posts, gas-alarms, and situation reports, amid the crackling of rifle-fire and the sputtering of the illuminating flares.

At last the relief is complete. The word is passed along. The outgoing unit, after communicating sundry items of information as to the habits and customs — mostly unpleasant — of the local Boche, coupled with sundry warnings as to his favourite targets and own tender spots, fades away down the communication-trenches, with whispered expressions of good-will — and you are left alone, wondering what would happen if the enemy were to make a surprise attack *now*.

Trench life is never comfortable at any time, but the first night in a strange trench is the most uncomfortable of all. For one thing, the trench feels unnaturally crowded. Moreover,we are young troops — the youngest troops in the world to-day — and that means much. We have no Mulvaneys or Learoyds among us. If we had, we should be taught a number of things — how to boil a canteen over a couple of glowing chips; how to hollow out a bed in hard soil; where to find water in an apparently dry trench — trifles small in themselves, but making all the difference between misery and comfort.

But that by the way. With daylight comes a new spirit — or rather, the old spirit — of confidence. Eager persons peer over the parapet, to observe

where the enemy is, and what he is like. They see little enough. Two hundred yards away an irregular ripple of sandbags—some white, some black — looking like a dirty wave-crest on a brown sea, marks the position of the German fire-trenches. This mixture of colours is thoughtful. If the sandbags were all of one tint, like our own, loopholes would be hard to conceal: under the German system, you never know at a distance whether you are looking at a loophole or merely a black sandbag. The intervening space is a wilderness of shell-holes, splintered tree-stumps, and rusty barbed wire. Further observation is cut short by a sniper's bullet, which travels past enquiring heads with a vicious crack. We have learned our first lesson. In trench warfare, by daylight at least, curiosity must be satisfied through peepholes or periscopes.

In the trench itself there is plenty to occupy us. There are watches to be kept and manual work to be done. A trench system is eternally throwing out annexes and undergoing repairs, for the artillery on the other side is always busy. There are supplies to be brought up. There is cooking to be done: that occupies much time, for firing-trenches to-day are equipped, like the fashionable lady's vanity-bag, with everything except the kitchen stove. And no bad thing either. Trench life has been described by competent authorities as "Weeks of Monotony tempered by Half-Hours of Hell." Nothing dispels monotony like the necessity of practising the primitive domestic virtues. At home we hire expensive menials — or expect our wives — to light our fires

and cook our dinners, because we are too busy or too civilized to do it ourselves. Over here we like doing it, because it is our actual instinct to do so, and also passes the time.

As for the Half-Hours of Hell, these mainly take the form of short, furious bombardments and midnight raids. But the German artillery is not very busy in this sector. Guns, and more guns, are urgently required farther north, where the Allied line, after stretching back and back during those anxious days in the spring of the year, has now reacted like a released bowstring and has shot the Boche back to the Meuse.

So far as we can gather from the sources at our disposal — official bulletins, intermittent newspapers, and trench gossip (personified in the American Expeditionary Force by a supposititious individual of great erudition but small reliability, whose Christian name is "Joe") — our cause is prospering from the North Sea to the Alps. Germany shot her bolt with her third great offensive on the twenty-seventh of May, when German arms once more crossed the Marne and penetrated to within twenty-eight miles of Paris. There they were stayed, in a battle where at least one third of the Allied troops were American, and where the young American Army got its first real chance, and took it. In this operation the Second and Third American Divisions were sent to stiffen the French line. Of these, the Third successfully held a vital bridgehead opposite Château Thierry: the Second captured Bouresches, Belleau Wood, and Vaux.

So much we know for certain, for these things happened before we left England, and official information was available. The work of the Marines, in the Second Division, has already passed into American history. But for news of subsequent happenings we have had to depend too much upon our friend Joe. All we know for certain is that on the fifteenth of July the enemy launched just one more offensive — his fourth and as it proved, his very last. This time, so far as we can gather, the Allies, instead of contenting themselves with defensive tactics, took the business into their own hands and bit suddenly and deeply into the side of the huge, distended, pocketful of Germans which hung down from Soissons over Paris. The pocket promptly contracted itself: the enemy disgorged himself from its mouth, and began to retreat. From all accounts he has been retreating ever since.

French, British, and American troops were all engaged in this, the final and triumphant redressing of the balance. And each were represented by their best. One of our liaison officers tells us of a memorial set up by French soldiers in honour of the dead of the famous Fifteenth Division of the British Army — the Highland Territorials — and of an inscription carved thereon which proclaimed that hereafter the Thistle of Scotland would forever flourish beside the Lilies of France. In that great fight not merely unity of command, but unity of sentiment, seem to have come to their own at last.

The Allied counter-attack struck deep along the

whole line. Soissons and Montdidier, we hear, are once more in our hands; while farther north, in Flanders, the British Third and Fourth Armies are sweeping forward for the last time in the blood-soaked valley of the Lys.

As for the American share, we have not heard too much, but what we have heard is enough to make us tingle. We hear of great work by the Regulars of the First, Second, and Third Divisions; by the Twenty-sixth — the Yankees of New England — and by the Forty-second Rainbow Division, from Yaphank. It is also reported that other American Divisions made no small impression upon Brother Boche — the Fourth, the Twenty-eighth; the Thirty-second, and the Seventy-seventh.

The Twenty-seventh and Thirtieth, we understand, are somewhere with the British opposite the Hindenburg Line near Cambrai. Doubtless we shall hear something of them too, in due course. Great days, great days! But to what a fever of exasperation are we aroused, who are not there ourselves!

CHAPTER TWELVE

CHASING MONOTONY

At present the authorities are engaged in impressing upon us the truth of the maxim which says that you must not run before you can walk. Our immediate duty is to show that we can stand the test of ordinary trench warfare.

First, such every-day nuisances as the German sniper. And here we have a pleasant little success to record.

When we took over these trenches, snipers were numerous and vigilant. If you raised your head above the parapet, one of two things happened. Either you heard a sound like the crack of a whiplash close to your ear; or you did not. If you did, you were lucky. If you did not, you were buried at dusk.

There is one piece of slightly rising ground in the enemy's line which commands an oblique view of a stretch of our front trenches. For a week we have been pestered by a sniper concealed somewhere along this eminence, about three hundred yards away, on our right front. We have scrutinized its whole expanse with periscopes and through loopholes, but there is no sign of trench or emplacement where the sniper might be concealed.

Yesterday that untutored but resourceful fire-eater, Eddie Gillette, turned his attention to the matter, the urgency of which had been impressed

upon him by the fact that a sniper's bullet, travelling sidewise down the trench, had chipped a groove in Eddie's own "tin derby" that very morning, Eddie's head being inside at the time.

"We got to locate that lobster," he observed. And he did.

In a field behind the support line there grows, or rather, rots, a crop of derelict and much-bombarded turnips. Last night Eddie, after a conference with his officer, Boone Cruttenden, and the top machine-gun sergeant, disappeared for an hour into the *hinterland*, and brought back with him an armful of selected esculents. The largest of these he proceeded this morning to spear upon a flat lath of wood. Upon the top of this eminence he perched his own steel helmet, at a jaunty angle. Attended by a respectfully interested cohort of disciples, or rubbernecks, he next selected a suitable spot in the front-line trench, and with the help of a length of rope and a little ingenuity succeeded in lashing the turnip-laden lath to the revetment of the parapet in such a fashion as to make it possible to slide the lath up and down.

It was a still, sunny, September morning, and the whole line was quiet, except for an occasional rifle-shot, and the intermittent boom of artillery beyond the next hill-crest to the south. Eddie's preliminary adjustments were barely completed when Boone Cruttenden arrived, carrying a periscope and attended by the machine-gun sergeant.

"Got everything fixed, Gillette?" enquired Boone.

"Yes, *sir*," replied Eddie, ignoring the cynical smiles of Joe McCarthy, who was present in the capacity of dramatic critic.

"Right," said Boone. "Go to it!"

The inventor cautiously slid the lath up in its groove, until the helmet-crowned turnip stood some six inches above the parapet, offering a goodly mark against the sky. Then crouching down, he waited. The spectators, with remarkable unanimity, followed his example.

Crack!

A bullet shaved the top sandbag and buried itself with a vicious thud in the back wall of the trench.

"Missed!" announced Gillette calmly. "We better let him try again."

"Lower the turnip a couple of minutes first," advised Boone. "A real man would n't keep his head up there all the time — unless it was a bone one!"

Gillette complied, and waited.

"What's the big idea, Ed?" enquired Al Thompson respectfully.

"The big idea," replied Eddie, "is first of all to let that Dutchman over there drill a hole in this turnip. Then, if we peek through the hole, we shall be looking along the track of the bullet — at this range it would travel on a pretty-nigh flat line — and we shall see the exact place the bullet started from, which is what we are after. In case we don't get the exact location, we will put up another turnip some other place in the trench, and get a cross-bearing from that. That's the big idea, boys!"

"And who," enquired the grating voice of Mr. Joe McCarthy, "is the poor fish who's gonna put his bean up above the parapet and peek through the hole?"

Eddie Gillette forbore to reply, but resumed his operations with added dignity, sliding his turnip-head once more into the enemy's view. There was another crack, and the steel helmet oscillated sharply.

"Right through the nose!" announced Eddie, with ghoulish satisfaction. "Now, Captain — quick!"

Already Boone Cruttenden, crouching low, was applying his periscope to the hole in the back of the turnip. The machine-gun sergeant, stationed at a tiny observation loophole in a steel plate close by, waited eagerly for instructions.

Boone, with his magnifying periscope, took a rapid observation of the constricted field of view afforded by the narrow tunnel through the turnip; then another, over the open parapet this time; then another, through the turnip again. He spoke rapidly.

"Sergeant, do you see two stunted willows on the sky-line, half-right?"

"Yes, sir."

"Below them, a single small bush?"

"Yes, sir. I got it."

"Well, lay a machine gun to cover the ground about five yards to the right of that. Call the range three-fifty. I guess he is somewhere around there. I can't see any loophole or anything, but maybe

he is lying right out in the open, covered in grass, or — "

Crack! The conscientious artist over the way was growing restive at his own want of success. This time he chipped the top of the steel helmet.

"That will do," said Boone. "Lower away that turnip, Gillette, and we'll take a second bearing farther along."

Mr. Gillette collected his paraphernalia with the solemn dignity of an acolyte taking part in a mystery. But he unbent to human level for a moment.

"You see," he observed caustically, "we don't require no poor fish here, Joe McCarthy!"

In due course a second turnip was hoisted and perforated, a second bearing taken, and another machine gun laid. The machine-gun teams took station; the first cartridges were fed into the chambers.

"Let 'em go the moment he snipes again," was Boone's order.

A third spot was selected, and a third turnip exposed. This time it wagged itself provokingly, and the sniper responded at once. It was a beautiful shot, but it was his last. Next moment two converging streams of machine-gun bullets were spattering his lair. What happened we shall never know, but we were never again troubled from that particular locality.

"We certainly got to hand it to you, Ed," announced Joe McCarthy, in an unusual fit of self-abasement.

Next, artillery fire. The Boche bombards our

trenches twice a day, and searches the back areas with shrapnel at night. He is not very persistent, and a little sharp retaliation from our gunners usually brings his performance to a conclusion. Still, it is unpleasant while it lasts.

To be shelled for the first time must fairly rank with the first cigarette, the first shave, and the first kiss as one of the unforgettable experiences of life. Opinions vary as to the best place to be during a bombardment—assuming that one has to be anywhere at all. Jim Nichols considers a shell-hole a good place.

"It is well known," he points out, "that no two bullets ever hit the same spot. Nelson, or some other historical gink, once said that the safest place for a man to put his head during a sea-fight was a hole made in a ship's side by a cannon-ball. Me for a shell-hole, every time!"

Boone Cruttenden thinks an ordinary trench dugout would be best. Else what are dugouts for?

"It depends on who made them," replies the veteran Major Powers. "The German officer's idea is all right. He turns on a squad of men, and they construct for him a combined club and restaurant somewhere near the centre of the earth. But even that is liable to have its exits blocked. Personally, if I were under bombardment, I should stay out in the trench. I am more likely to be hit, but less likely to be buried; and I don't intend to go putting the cart before the horse at *my* funeral!"

All had an opportunity to test their theories — and their nerve — the first afternoon after taking

over the trenches. Boone and Jim shared a dugout in the front line, sunk below the forward parapet, under the sandbags. Having contracted the British habit of afternoon tea, they were occupied towards five o'clock in brewing that beverage in a mess-tin, when suddenly, with a whizz and a rush, a German shell passed over the trench and burst amid a cloud of flying clods fifty yards beyond it.

"This is the afternoon bombardment that we were warned about," said Jim, pouring out two cups of tea. "Now we shall know whether we are shell-shy or not!"

Boone took his aluminum teacup in his hand, and held it to his lips. Simultaneously another shell landed outside — fifty yards short of the parapet this time. The earth shook. Fragments of dirt and grit fell from the sandbag ceiling into the tea. Boone regarded the hand which was holding the teacup. He noted with secret satisfaction that though his heart was bumping slightly, the hand was as steady as a rock.

"That is what is known as 'bracketing,' I guess," said Nichols. "The next shell will strike an average between the ranges of the first two and get this happy home of ours just where the cork got the bottle."

He was right — or nearly. Next moment, with a triumphant shriek, a shell landed fairly in the trench, fifteen yards to their right. They felt little concussion, for the trench was provided with stout earthen traverses, which limited the radius of the explosion and blanketed its force.

"The question before the House," said Boone, "is whether we stay where we are or go away from here. Hallo, what's that?"

A hoarse cry was passing down the trench from mouth to mouth — a cry which never fails to tug at a soldier's heart, for he knows not what comrade may be involved:

"Stretcher-bearers!"

Both officers scrambled out of their shelter. Three men, crouching inside the entrance to a neighbouring dugout, had been hit by fragments of shell — all in the legs. In due course the stretchers arrived, and the trio — our first actual casualties — were borne off upon that long and tortuous journey which starts in a communication-trench and ends possibly at Home. They were followed by the mingled chorus of sympathy and congratulation always accorded in these days to those who are taken, by those who are left.

More German shells arrived. The parapet was hit in two places, and burst sandbags flew in the air. But it was not "heavy stuff" — so the artillery officer remarked, busy in his forward observing-station with periscope and telephone — and the actual damage was slight.

"I am calling for retaliation now," he explained to Boone and Jim. He gabbled a formula to the telephone orderly, who repeated it into a portable instrument before him. Presently the man looked up.

"Battery fired!" he announced. And a few moments later —

Whish! Whish! Whish! Whish!

Four hissing streaks of sound passed over the trench from the rear. Next moment four heavy detonations shook the earth. A hundred pairs of eager eyes, peeping cautiously over the parapet, observed four fountains of earth and smoke spring up in No Man's Land.

"Short!" muttered the gunner officer, and issued a corrective order.

So the duel went on. It was a typical artillery fight, in that each side endeavoured to dissuade its opponent from further participation by bombarding, not one another, but one another's friends in the trenches. The German fire did not slacken; if anything it increased. Probably Brother Boche was well aware that a fresh division had taken over the line, and desired to make a good first impression. But there were no more casualties.

"I'm tired of this. What about finishing our tea?" enquired Boone Cruttenden of Jim Nichols.

"Sure thing," said Jim. "Come on!"

But no. As they rounded the traverse leading into their own particular bay, there came a roar and a bang — and their home was not. When the smoke cleared away they saw, instead of a rugged and workmanlike parapet, a jumbled heap of disintegrated sandbags and twisted timber-work.

Jim Nichols turned to his companion, with his slow smile.

"There!" he said. "Do you still hold that the best place during a bombardment is a dugout?"

"I'm stung, I admit," said Boone. "But now you can test *your* theory. You can sit in the middle of that mess that the shell has made. It's in full view of the enemy, but of course you'll be safe!"

The rival theorist smiled again.

"I confess I have died on that proposition," he said.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

AN EXCURSION AND AN ALARUM

We now regard ourselves, justifiably, as initiated.

We have been bombarded fairly regularly. We do not like it, but we can stand it, which is all that matters — as eels probably remark while being skinned. We are getting used, also, to the sight of sudden death and human blood. These things affect us less than we expected. It is all a matter of environment. If you were to see a man caught and cut in two between a street-car and a taxi-cab in your own home town, the spectacle would make you physically sick and might haunt you for weeks, because such incidents are not part of the recognized routine of home town life. But here, they are part of the day's work: we are prepared for them: they are what we are in the War for. And, curiously and providentially, it seldom occurs to any of us to suspect that it may be his turn next. Thus all-wise Nature maintains our balance for us.

We have made another interesting discovery about Nature, and that is that habit can be stronger than instinct, and pride than either. The first law of Nature is said to be the instinct of self-preservation. Yet the average soldier, even in the inferno of modern warfare, gives less trouble to his leaders when under shell-fire than when his dinner does not come up to the usual standard, or he has run out of cigarettes.

Pride, again. This morning, two machine-gunners, namely, one Sam Gates and our old friend Miss Sissy Smithers, observed through their loophole a derelict German helmet lying amid the hedge of rusty barbed wire outside the trench. The passion for souvenirs is inborn in the human race, but most strongly developed in soldiers taking their first turn in the trenches.

"Me for that lid!" announced Sissy.

"How are you gonna get it?" enquired his friend.

"The only way I know of. Going over the top and fetching it."

Sam stared meditatively through the loophole, and remarked carelessly:

"You 'll wait till it gets dark, I guess."

Human nature is a curious thing. Sissy Smithers was reckoned a quiet youth. In civil life he earned a romantic but unheroic livelihood by selling ladies' hosiery. But his friend's perfectly casual and reasonable observation stung him to the roots of his being. His face flamed. Without a word he scrambled upon the firing-step, heaved himself over the parapet, walked quite deliberately to the barbed wire, and brought back the helmet. The helmet had a chip in it. The chip was made by a German sniper as Sissy lifted the helmet out of the wire.

The Boche employs other vehicles of frightfulness besides artillery. The Flying Pig, for example. This engaging animal is really an aerial mine, about six feet long. It appears suddenly high in the air above No Man's Land, propelled thither by

some invisible and inaudible agency behind the German line, and descends upon us in a series of amusing somersaults. Having reached its destination it explodes, with results disastrous to the landscape. A single Flying Pig can do more damage than a whole artillery bombardment. But it possesses one redeeming feature. *You can see it coming.* When you do, the correct procedure is to decide quickly where it is going to come down, and then go somewhere else. It is an exhilarating pastime, but attended by complications when played by a large number of persons in a narrow trench — especially when differences of opinion exist as to where the animal really intends to alight.

Then there is gas. But gas is more of a nuisance than a danger in these days, since we are all — even the horses — equipped with a special breathing apparatus, and carry the same night and day. Our newest mask, too, is a great advance on its predecessors. The chief trouble about gas-masks hitherto has been the formation of mist on the inside of the goggles. Now, by the happy inspiration of some nameless benefactor in the Service of Supply, the breathing tubes are so arranged that the filtered air, when it arrives, passes right over the inner surface of the eye-pieces, clearing the glass at every intake of breath.

Mustard gas is another story, because it attacks the skin — unless you happen to be a coloured gentleman, and then apparently you do not mind so much.

But our busy time is at night. Supplies come up;

casualties go back. Trench repairs have to be executed in places inaccessible by daylight. Sandbags innumerable have to be filled and set in position.

"This yer War," observes Joe McCarthy, bitterly, "will be finished when all the dirt in France has been shovelled into sandbags — by you an' me! Then they'll have to quit, or fall through!"

But the most thrilling experiences of trench warfare are trench raids. These are not necessarily elaborate affairs. Some of them are quite informal. Their objects are twofold — the first, to keep the enemy guessing, the second, to obtain information. The second is the most important. It is vitally necessary to know just where every one of your enemy's Divisions is located. The simplest method of finding out is to send over armed deputations in the dead of night, with instructions to bring back a few assorted Germans. These, when they arrive, are interrogated, and their equipment and shoulder-straps are examined, for clues as to their identity. In this way it is usually possible to discover what Divisions are in station opposite, and how much front each holds. If a Division is spread out widely, you may be tolerably sure that the enemy has no serious designs upon your sector of the line. But if Divisions are "distributed in depth" — that is, with narrow fronts and long tails — the wise commander begins to accumulate ammunition and draft reserves into his back areas. Before the great German drive in March, against the attenuated British line at St. Quentin, Sir Douglas Haig was made aware, by this and other

means, of the cheering intelligence that he had opposite to a comparatively short sector of his front sixty-four German Divisions — or six more Divisions than there were British Divisions in the whole of France and Belgium! That was a case in which nothing could be done except put up the best defence possible with the troops available, for equally overwhelming odds were being massed against the rest of the British line. But in normal cases, to be forewarned is to be forearmed.

Trench raids are intermittent affairs. Patrols, on the other hand, must be organized every night. These excursions are not necessarily belligerent. Their main object is to collect information, and to make sure that the enemy keeps to his own side of the street. If two patrols do meet, and feel constrained to "start something," the one thing no one ever does is to pull a gun or throw a bomb. To do so would be to invite impartial participation in the game by the machine guns of both sides. It must be cold steel or nothing. As often as not, it is nothing. Two patrols may meet, and cut one another dead, like rival beauties on Fifth Avenue.

One night Boone Cruttenden found himself detailed for patrol duty, with a sergeant and four men. The party were to scale the parapet, pass through a gap in the wire, and make a tour of a certain section of No Man's Land. The whole operation, which was by this time a familiar one, was expected to occupy about an hour. Orders were given to the trench garrison that there must be no firing during this period.

Just before midnight, in the soft September darkness, Boone led his followers over the sandbags. It was a quiet night — suspiciously quiet — and there was little to be heard save some impatient rips of machine-gun fire farther south, and the soft explosion of the Verey pistols on both sides. There are three impressions of nocturnal trench warfare which never fade from the memory of those who have served their apprenticeship therein — one, the endless vista of bursting star-shells sinking from the sky along that tortuous, dolorous way that calls itself No Man's Land; two, the eternal *plop-plop!* of the Verey pistols; three, the mingled smell of fresh earth, decaying matter, and disinfectants.

Boone's first objective was a deep shell-crater some fifteen yards outside the wire. He had discovered it two nights previously, and it had struck him as a useful location for an advanced patrolling base. He gathered his henchmen around him and addressed them in a low voice.

"Sergeant, you stay here with McCarthy. Gillette and Thompson, crawl along our own front in that direction" — he pointed south — "until you come to the row of willow stumps that runs across from our line to theirs. (It's an old turnpike, really.) Examine our wire all the way along, and see if it has been monkeyed with. If you catch sight of an enemy patrol, Gillette will stay and watch while Thompson gets back here and reports to the sergeant. Gillette, you will *not* take any notice of them" — Eddie sighed brokenly — "unless they show signs of wanting to come too close to our

trenches." (Eddie's spirits rose again.) "Then use your own judgment. Your best plan will probably be to get home by the shortest route and warn the officer in charge. But don't start any trouble if you can help it, because I shall be over on the other side with Gogarty, and we want to get home too! In any case we must all be back in an hour, because the artillery have a date with the German back areas at two, and we don't want to get mixed up in any retaliation that may be going. Gogarty, follow me up this dry ditch. It leads right to the German wire, and we may find a German sentry-post halfway across. So come quietly."

The two little expeditions crept away, on routes at right angles to one another. We will follow Boone and Mr. James Gogarty, who has not hitherto been introduced to the reader.

Jimmy Gogarty was twenty years of age, of wizened appearance, and raucous voice. He looked and sounded exactly like what he was — a bell-hop. He had exchanged livery for uniform at the first breath of hostilities, and was now reckoned one of the smartest scouts in Boone's Company. He was a New Yorker born and bred, and had fought his way steadily up the social ladder of Second Avenue by the exercise of five remarkably sharp wits and two unpleasantly hard fists. He was devoted to Boone Cruttenden.

The trenches were about two hundred yards apart. Progress along the ditch was not easy, for it was choked with undergrowth and refuse. Moreover, there were here and there unburied

Germans whom it were wiser to avoid. Occasionally the ditch was intersected by other routes — old trenches, and the like. Here they Stopped, Looked, and Listened, as they had been warned to do all their lives at more peaceful cross-roads far away. But all was quiet. Too quiet, Boone thought. On his previous excursions he had usually been aware of much life — furtive, guttural, inquisitive life — all around him. But to-night No Man's Land seemed a desert.

Boone whispered his suspicions to his squire.

"I guess dat means de bums is goin' to start somethin'," observed Mr. Gogarty hoarsely. (He was regrettably tough in his speech. The thin veneer of hotel civilization had long been rubbed off him.)

"We are fairly close to their wire now," whispered Boone. "I am going to get out of this drain and prospect along their front. You go straight ahead, and watch out in case they come crawling down the ditch. If they do, give a whistle — just one — to warn me, and then beat it for the Sergeant. Otherwise, expect me here in ten minutes."

"I get you," said James agreeably.

Ten minutes later the pair met in the appointed spot. Boone was covered with mud and panting heavily: Gogarty was quiescent, except that he was emitting a peculiar noise. If he had been a cat, you would have said he was purring.

"Seen anything?" asked Boone.

"Yep."

"What?"

"Two Dutchmen! Dey was in dis ditch — 'bout thoity yards along. Keepin' watch, I guess. *Some* watch!"

"Where are they now?"

"Still there. Quite still — there!"

"You mean, — ?"

"Well, I ain't one to blow, but — I'm here, and dey are not! You seen anything, Captain?"

"Yes; listen! There's a German raiding-party, or something, mustering outside their wire. I saw them creeping into line, one by one, when the moon came out just now. They are coming across, and soon!"

"How are dey going to get through *our* wire?" enquired practical James.

"Either break it up with a five-minute trench-mortar bombardment, or creep forward and blow a few gaps with dynamite torpedoes. Now, I am going to wait here until they start moving. Then I shall get back, quick. Meanwhile" — Boone tugged at his field despatch-book — "I want you to take a note to Major Powers."

Flat on his stomach, Boone was squirming deep into the rank undergrowth of the ditch.

"Hold this electric torch right down over the paper," he said, "while I write. Keep a good look-out at the same time, and if you see any one, switch it off."

For two minutes Boone scribbled frantically. The fighting blood of all the Cruttendens was coursing in his veins. He forgot the official form of address: he omitted certain prescribed formulæ —

the date, the hour, his own geographical position but he overlooked nothing else. The despatch, when completed, read:

Dear Major, the Hun is going to raid you. So far as I can see it will be between the points A and B on attached sketch. I suggest you send out a m.-g. to shell-hole marked X, from which you can enfilade whole front in danger. Come to shell-hole yourself, or send some one, and I will come along and warn you as soon as I see them start.

"Take that to Major Powers right away," he said. "As you pass through the shell-hole warn the Sergeant, and tell him to expect a machine gun there. But whatever you do, find the Major! Try Battalion Headquarters first — in the support-line. If he is not there, he'll be in the firing-trench. But find him, whatever you do, and quick!"

"I'll find him," replied the retired bell-hop, confidently. "Why, I found people in the Biltmore before now!"

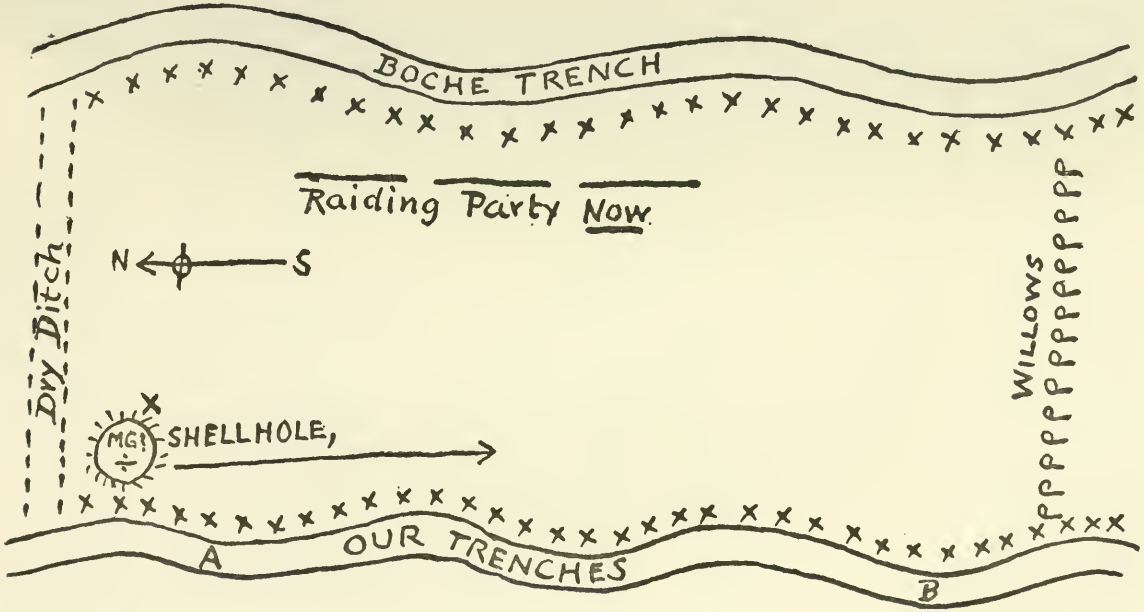
He began to creep away.

"Come back here, of course," added Boone.

Mr. Gogarty chuckled hoarsely.

"Cap," he replied, "you betcher!"

Ten minutes passed. Boone, tingling like an induction coil, watched the progress of the raiding-party. They were moving very methodically, keeping a beautiful line. Whenever a Verey light burst above them, or the moon asserted herself, they were flat on their faces in a moment; but during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the next period of darkness they always seemed to cover another twenty yards. They were halfway across now, almost exactly opposite to Boone.

Another ten minutes. Still no Gogarty.

"I wonder where he is," muttered Boone restlessly. "We ought to have a watch on the far end of this ditch. If they come creeping along it, as they *ought* to do — Gee whizz!"

From behind the German line came a chorus of sharp discharges; then a whirring and a humming over Boone's head. Then the earth rocked beneath the tremendous detonation, and the skies were lit up with the flash of a barrage of German trench-mortar bombs, exploding along two hundred yards of American wire.

The barrage lasted just one minute. Directly after, three things happened, almost simultaneously. The line of raiders rose to its feet and dashed with a yell through the writhing remnants of the wire. The voice of a machine gun — nay, a pair of machine guns — broke into steady reverberation from the shell-crater, seventy yards to Boone's right. Lastly, a rocket shot up from the American support-line.

"That 's for our artillery," said Boone to himself. "They'll be putting down a heavy barrage on No Man's Land in a moment — right here. Good-night, nurse!"

He began to run swiftly back along the ditch, crouching low. In this posture he rounded a slight bend, and two steel helmets clashed together. Boone, standing up to massage his ringing head,

realized that the faithful Gogarty had returned to duty.

"We got dem guys fixed this time!" announced the scout triumphantly. "*Two* Vickers guns in de shell-hole, to give 'em hell comin' and goin'!'

It was true. Major Powers had done marvels in the twenty scant minutes at his disposal. He had decided to send two machine guns over to the shell-hole; for ammunition-belts sometimes jam, and it was essential that a continuous stream of bullets should be maintained along the wire during the fateful moment of attack. He had also warned the Artillery and Brigade Headquarters of impending events. Finally, he had withdrawn his trench garrison from the front line as a precaution against a trench-mortar bombardment, and had aligned them, with bayonets fixed, in the support-trench behind, with orders to dash forward to their original positions the moment the signal was given.

They were hasty preparations, but six weeks' rehearsal could not have made their success more complete. It was just such an undertaking as suits the American soldier — without cohesion or direct leadership, and depending almost entirely upon quick grasp of the situation and spontaneous teamwork. The German attacking party, plunging forward through the broken defences, came right into line with the Vickers guns, with the result that it found itself wading through a river of lead flowing at the rate of five hundred bullets per minute at a distance of eighteen inches from the ground. Many went down at once: the others stumbled

on gallantly enough, and reached the American trench just in time to see a wave of yelling American soldiers break into it from the ground behind.

Some of the raiders leapt down into the trench, and were submerged at once. A few threw bombs, most of which were deftly caught and thrown back before they could explode. Others were engaged upon the parapet itself. The rest, making heavy weather in the wire and tortured by the stream of bullets, broke back, only to find that the second machine gun was maintaining a steady enfilade fire across their line of retreat.

At the height of the turmoil the sky far behind the American lines was suddenly illuminated by flashes. Next moment, with a rush and a roar, the American retaliatory barrage was tearing up No Man's Land and the German fire-trenches beyond. The raiders were completely isolated.

For four minutes the tempest of shells raged. Then, with stunning suddenness, came silence, grim as death, broken only by a few hoarse cries and a little sympathetic uneasiness farther down the line. The raid was over. How it had fared the Germans over the way never knew, for not a single raider came back to tell them.

The dead and wounded enemy were disentangled from the wire, where most of them had fallen. American casualties, thanks to Boone's warning and Major Powers's dispositions, had been comparatively slight, though the bombs had taken a certain gruesome toll. Eddie Gillette, who with Al Thompson had returned from his tour of in-

spection just in time to take part in the defence of the trench, was suffering from abraded knuckles, due to an encounter with a set of Teutonic teeth. Otherwise, none of our particular friends had received a scratch, though Boone and Gogarty had escaped their own artillery barrage by four seconds.

An hour later the life of the line had reverted once more from Hell to Monotony. A working-party was out in front, repairing wire and replacing sandbags. Patrols were out again, in case the enemy should feel disposed to throw good money after bad. The artillery stood to, prepared to resume the argument if need be. But not a German gun cheeped all night. Possibly they were surprised about something.

Meanwhile a string of prisoners was filing back to Regimental Headquarters, down a communication-trench — or *boyau*, to employ the expressive phrase of its Gallic constructors — muddy, dishevelled, and sulky. German prisoners in these days are not usually sulky: most of them are frankly delighted to be counted out of the War. But this particular consignment were distinguished, under their grime, by a certain peculiar and awful air of outraged majesty.

On arrival at Headquarters the mystery was revealed. An American Staff Officer, an expert linguist, took charge of the party, and issued the usual orders.

"Sergeant, find out if there are any officers among them, and put them by themselves. Then search the others."

He was answered — in tolerable English — by a lanky youth who stood at the end of the long line of prisoners.

"We are *all* officers!" he announced, with dignity.

It was a simple enough explanation, really. This was no common or vulgar raiding-party. It was a junior officers' Instruction Class, sent over to gain a little experience and confidence in the delicate art of trench-raiding on this "quiet sector of the line." It was a genuine and painful shock to them to find that the line was held by the Americans in force — the Americans, who, according to the Great General Staff at Headquarters, were still at home, chasing buffaloes down Broadway. Too bad!

But already these small diversions are swept into the limbo of the Things that do not Matter. Word has just come that our period of trench warfare is over, and that we are to proceed to the Argonne, to take part in the Great Offensive.

Evidently some one at the top has decided that this War has gone on long enough.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

THE FOREST OF THE ARGONNE

During the past fortnight we have been learning the difference between Warfare of Position and Warfare of Movement, and we are very, very tired. Moreover, the end of our labour is not yet. But we have made good. The Divisional General himself has informed us of the fact, in an official Order. So has the enemy, in an even more flattering fashion. He has fallen back — steadily and stubbornly — but back.

The fighting began more than a fortnight ago. But first of all we had to get to the scene of action. That involved endless marches, through undulating, heavily wooded, exhausting country. It is the fall of the year. Rain is abundant, roads are not too numerous, and these are packed from end to end with traffic so close that it is sometimes impossible for a vehicle to find turning-space in ten miles.

These roads, though well constructed and constantly reënforced, are none too good. They were never built to carry such traffic as this, and since the inevitable ditch on either side deprives them of lateral support, the effect of a constant stream of monstrously heavy vehicles upon the surface of one of them is that of a rolling-pin upon a strip of dough — it makes it wider. Not only wider, but thinner; for the edges of the road are squeezed out

into the ditch, and the whole fabric loses cohesion. Almost anywhere, but in particular near the sides, a wheel is apt suddenly to find a soft spot and sink up to the axle, with consequent congestion and tumult.

It is a double tide of traffic. Both streams are made up of similar constituents, with certain necessary contrasts. There are bodies of infantry, either going up into action or else coming out. There is no mistaking the latter. Their uniforms are splashed, their faces are caked, and their eyes are red for lack of sleep. They are obviously "all in," but they hobble manfully along, with the comfortable satisfaction of men who have left behind them a task well and truly performed. They exchange ironic greetings with the full-fed, boisterous bands of adventurers whom they encounter hastening in the opposite direction.

Ambulances, again. Those going forward are empty and trim: those returning are travel-stained and crowded. It is rumoured that the American Army has suffered over a hundred thousand casualties during the past few weeks. The fighting in the Argonne Forest has been terrific. Grandpré, through which we expect to pass, has been taken and lost half a dozen times. Each of the ambulances carries a full complement of stretcher-cases; and usually beside the driver sits a gaunt, miry statue with his arm in a sling, or a blood-soaked rag about his head. Occasionally, too, there occurs a civilian farm-wagon, containing a dozen or so less serious cases, with tickets tied to their buttons, on their

way to an Evacuation Station. There are also women and children passengers; for the battle zone is extending daily, and it is needful, from sheer humanity, to remove the civil population to safer ground. On the box-seat of one of these wagons sits a small French boy. Perhaps he is eight years old. He is easily the proudest and happiest person in all this dolorous procession, for his right wrist is swathed in a slightly encrimsoned bandage, gloriously conspicuous.

Then there are motor wagons, also full. Those going up contain ammunition, barbed wire, galvanized iron sheeting, engineering material, or rations. Those returning are heaped with salvage of every kind — furniture, the property of the refugees; battlefield *dèbris*, and, wherever an available chink presents itself, men — footsore men, stragglers, or regular working-parties. The latter are usually coloured, and, with steel helmets balanced at every angle upon their woolly pates, smile upon the seething activity beneath them with the simple enjoyment of a child at its first circus.

These wagons — or camions — are of two types. There are big Thorneycroft lorries, holding three tons and made in England, and smaller vehicles of American design, known as "Quads." These possess the unusual feature of a drive upon either axle; so that if your rear wheels slip backwards into a ditch or quagmire, your front wheels will continue to function and will extricate you in no time. Heaven knows how these contraptions are steered, but steered they are, and with remarkable skill.

Then there are guns — and more guns. These are mainly French seventy-fives and hundred-and-fifty-fives, with American gun teams. Those going up are workmanlike, but inconspicuous. They are newly painted with the usual red, green, and yellow splashes. The fishing-nets which will be spread above them when they get into action, intersticed with grass, leaves, and twigs, are at present neatly furled and lashed along the barrels. The gunners sprawl anywhere but upon their hard little iron seats. The guns coming out look different. All are plastered with mud; some are on the casualty list, and are being towed upon trolleys by fussy little traction engines.

Here and there in the procession wallow British tanks. These are either "Heavies," weighing nearly thirty tons and carrying a crew of seven or eight, or "Whippets," which only require three men and can move at the rate of twelve miles an hour.

The tank is the humourist of this unhumorous War. Its method of joining a close-packed procession of road traffic is characteristic. It appears suddenly out of a wood in a field beside the road, obliterates thirty yards of a hedge, squeezes a ditch flat, and insinuates itself sideways, with jolly *abandon*, into that part of the procession which happens to be passing at the moment — the whole in a manner reminiscent of that heavy-footed and determined individual who is accustomed by similar tactics to secure for himself a good place in the queue outside a movie pay-box. On the other hand, should you be ditched or dis-

abled in any way, to your own discomfort and the congestion of traffic, a tank is always willing to swing good-humouredly out of the line, scramble across country for a field or so, lurch heavily into the roadway again, harness itself to a tow-rope, and extract you from your present predicament as easily and as suddenly as a mastodon might extract a cork from a bottle.

Certainly our march gave us a comprehensive view of the ingredients of modern warfare. American soldiers, white and black — mostly cheerful; French refugees — all sad. Guns, limbers, camions, carts, ambulances, tanks — all moving in an endless, tumultuous, profane stream. At cross-roads, traffic policeman struggling manfully with an impossible job. Automobiles everywhere — Cadillacs, Fords, and Dodges — all trying to make openings and steal a march upon the rest of Creation. Above us, the sky of France, weeping for her lost children. Around us, the undulating, rain-blurred hillsides of the Argonne Forest. Beneath our feet, Mud, Mud, Mud.

Day after day we tramped — through Toul, the northwest corner of the great rectangle of French soil which has been an American military colony since the summer of nineteen-seventeen; across the trench lines of the old days of stationary warfare, where Frenchmen faced the Boches for three long years. American troops have fought there too. Here, in what was once No Man's Land, stand the ruins of Seicheprey, famed as having been the scene of the first clash between American and

German troops. (It was a raid, and we lost our first prisoners there. Well, we have plenty of Germans now to barter for them, when the time comes — and then some!) Then on past Montfaucon, the Crown Prince's headquarters at the Battle of Verdun, now an American stronghold; through miles and miles of devastated country, with here and there a little American graveyard (to which we pay due reverence), to Grandpré. This is a mere fragment of a village, clinging to the face of a rock looking south, and is shelled out of recognition. Then on, through the Bois des Loges, following the tide of victory northward, towards Mézières and Sedan. Somewhere to our right lies Verdun, garrisoned by American soldiers — all, that is, save the Citadel, a wondrous Gibraltar dug into the interior of a hill, containing miles of illuminated passageways; barracks, a bakery, an arsenal, a chapel, a theatre. Here the French maintain their own garrison — and maybe their own secrets. Secrets or no, it was that Citadel and that garrison which broke the back of the German assault in the critical days of nineteen-sixteen.

Somewhere on our left marches the Army of the French General Gouraud, keeping pace with our own in the great enveloping movement of which our attack forms the extreme right.

And there we were sent into the battle. It being our first, our impressions are somewhat confused. In theory, our own particular part in the enterprise was a simple one. A wood lay upon our front, and

we were ordered to capture it. And we did so — all save the far edge. But at a price. When our barrage lifted in the early dawn, and we dashed forward to the assault which we had rehearsed so often, our consciousness was mainly of barbed wire and machine-gun bullets. These were in unholy alliance everywhere, and took grievous toll. Buck Stamper, the biggest man in the Battalion, was the first one to go down. He was shot in the legs, and another bullet passed through his heart as he struggled forward, crippled but game, on his hands and knees. But a hundred men had seen him die, and the gun which had knocked him out was in their hands three minutes later. Still, formations were broken up, communication with the rear was cut, and the brunt of the battle began to fall upon the individual. Now it is as an individual fighter that the American soldier excels. He has his faults. To-day attacks have to be carefully rehearsed; battles are fought on a strict time-table. The eager young fighter is too apt to jump off the mark before the signal is given, and overrun his objective when he reaches it. This gets him into trouble with his best friend, the Gunner; for under these circumstances the latter must either forbear to fire or else risk hitting his own Infantry. But it is a fault on the right side, and is soon corrected by painful experience. On the other hand, it develops in its owner that most priceless quality of the soldier, initiative. Some of the finest work in this War has been accomplished by small bodies of troops — particularly British and American — working for-

ward under a young officer, or a sergeant, or very often under no leader at all, to the capture of some vital point long after they have lost touch with the directing force behind.

The upshot of it all was that after a week of hand-to-hand fighting and bloody murder we cleared the tenacious Hun right out of the wood — at this point more than a mile thick — leaving him possessed of nothing but the far edge. We are terribly exhausted, and our losses do not bear thinking of; but we have begged, before we are withdrawn, to be permitted to capture that far edge and consolidate the whole position. Our prayer has been granted. We attack to-morrow, refreshed by a lull of four days.

"And," observed Colonel Graham to his assembled officers, "if we Americans on the right can do our part, and swing our horn of the line clear around through Metz and Sedan, we shall have the whole German Army in a pocket. And then — may the Lord have mercy on them, for we will not!"

Colonel Graham is a comparatively new arrival among us, but we are children in his sight when it comes to experience of actual fighting. Our own commander has gone home sick, and Colonel Graham reigns in his stead. He is a regular of the old school. Soldiering is the breath of his nostrils, and the Army is his father and mother. He has been over here more than twelve months, and has seen much service with our Allies farther north.

Behold him in his headquarters, lately the property of some German gentlemen compelled for business reasons to move farther east — thick-set, hard as nails, and twinkling humorously through his spectacles upon his battle-stained disciples. Most of our friends are present — but not all. Jim Nichols is there; so is Major Floyd, who has no particular call to be there at all, for we are within a few hundred yards of the German front line, and we are to attack at dawn. It is now nearly four o'clock in the morning.

Another transient visitor is present — a young officer of the Air Service, by name Harvey Blane. His present duty is to maintain connection between the forces on the ground and the forces of the air. He has come into the line to-night in order to inform the Colonel of the arrangements concluded between the Artillery and the aeroplanes for the protection of the Infantry in the coming attack. Aviators do not vary much as a class. They are all incredibly young; they are all endowed with the undefinable but clear-cut individuality which comes to earth-dwellers who have learned to maintain themselves in some other element — sailors possess it in similar degree — and they are all intensely reticent in the presence of laymen about their experiences in the air. Such an one was young Harvey Blane.

There was a full muster of officers in the crowded dugout, for the Colonel was outlining the morrow's operations, and pencils were busy. But Major Powers, that wise and kindly Ulysses, was not

there. He was lying in one of a cluster of newly made American graves at the back of the wood which he had helped to capture.

Neither was Boone Cruttenden.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

THE ELEVENTH HOUR

THE Colonel was speaking.

"Now listen to what the Intelligence Report has to say about the enemy's defensive arrangements.

"*The road leading into the Wood on the west side is said to be furnished with tank traps.* Well, we don't have any tanks to-day, so we should worry about that. (By the way, boys, remind me to tell you a story afterwards about a tank.) *All indications point to the fact that the enemy battalion occupying the north side of Lapin Wood* — that's where we are now — *has received orders to hold the position to the last.* Well, the last will come, we hope, about five-fifteen this morning. *When dislodged, it is probable that the enemy will fall back nearly two kilometres, in order to occupy prepared positions on a newly constructed line south of the village of Ventreuil.* That need not worry us, because we shall be relieved as soon as we fire him out of here. . . . Now for machine guns! *Nine machine guns have been located between points A and B on the northern edge of Lapin Wood* — that is delightful — *distributed as follows* — Company Officers, get these down on your maps. . . . *Wire.* H'm-m-m! *Three lines interwoven in the trees on north side of wood, at distance of three metres.* Well, wire is the business of the Trench Mortar folks. *Trenches. Enemy's fire-trenches are situated along northern edge of wood.* We have no-

ticed them! *Elements of trenches are visible on open ground behind, at points* . . . Take this down, please. . . . *Miscellaneous. Bois des Loups. Flashes have been observed in this wood.* They certainly have! *Careful observation of the angle of fall and sound-ranging reports lead to the conclusion that there are at least three batteries of Seventy-sevens there, together with two or three heavy mortars.* Well, I guess our Artillery will take care of *that.*"

The Colonel looked up from the Report and wiped his spectacles, which had grown dim in the humid atmosphere of the dugout.

"Machine guns will be our chief snag, I guess," he observed. "Talking of machine guns, just how badly was Boone Cruttenden hit last week?"

"Shrapnel in the right shoulder, sir," replied Jim Nichols. "Not very serious, I believe."

"He was gotten away all right, I hope?"

"Yes. His own men brought him back."

"He did a fine piece of work," said the Colonel. "But I want the names of *all* concerned, for citation. How did Boone and his bunch manage to get into that machine-gun nest at all? I have had no time to go through the official report yet. Did he creep around behind and catch them napping, or what?"

"Partly that, sir. But what helped most was the action of a single enlisted man. We were lying in a belt of trees. A clearing lay between us and the German line, which was less than two hundred yards away. The machine-gun nest was on our left front, and commanded the clearing."

"Yes, yes, I get that. Go on!"

"Boone and his party," continued Jim, "had been gone about twenty minutes on their detour through the undergrowth which was to cut out this nest. We were lying along the edge of the clearing, ready to make a supporting bayonet rush if Boone got in among them. At what I thought was the right moment I passed the word down the line for the men to be ready. And then — and then —"

"Well?"

"And then, sir, the *darndest* thing you ever saw!" proclaimed Jim, breaking away from strict technicalities in his emotion. "One of my men jumped suddenly to his feet and charged out into the middle of the clearing. He had a little flag — our flag — on the end of his bayonet, and he acted like he was stark insane."

"Who was the man?"

"His name was Smithers. Miss Sissy Smithers, the boys called him. He was a sissy, in his ways, usually."

"And what did he do?"

"He stood there shouting to the enemy to come out and fight. He yelled, — 'I see you, you Dutchmen! You Squareheads! You Slobs! Look at me! Look at this li'l old Flag! Fire on that if you dare!' Then he held his rifle up high, with the Stars and Stripes on the end of it."

There ran a sudden thrill around the crowded table. The American venerates his Flag in a fashion hardly comprehended by the Englishman. Every nation must worship some totem. In the Englishman this impulse finds vent in loyalty to the Crown.

We love the Union Jack, and we salute it upon state occasions. But we take off our hats to the King, and pray God to save him, because he stands for a tradition that goes right back a thousand years and more. The American pins everything — national honor, national tradition, personal loyalty, everything — to Old Glory.

"Well?" enquired the Colonel — presently.

"For a moment," pursued Nichols, "the enemy did nothing. He was kind of paralyzed, I guess. Then the machine guns in that nest spoke up, and poor Smithers went down. Even then he was only hit in the legs. He sat up, and waved his flag again. Then they got him in the body, and he fell on his back. But he managed to keep his rifle erect for another fifteen seconds or so. He shouted, too, as he lay — calling them cowards, and daring them to come and take the Flag. By that time the guns were trained right on him, and — he passed out. But" — Nichols's voice rose again exultantly — "they had been so busy trying to fix poor Sissy that they never thought to look around behind them; and right then Boone and his bunch jumped in on their necks, and the nest was out of business for keeps! We went across with the supporting party and helped them clean up. Turned their own machine guns on them too, until a German field battery got to work on us."

"I suppose that was when you got most of your casualties?" said the Colonel.

"Yes, sir. Two men killed, besides Smithers, and Boone and seven others wounded. The men were all

fine. After the shelling died down at dusk, and we were settling into our new positions, two or three Huns who knew a little English started to josh us; explained how they were coming over presently to turn us out, and beat us up, and show themselves a time generally. Finally one of our men, called McCarthy, pushed his head over the sandbags, and yelled: 'Aw, what's the use of pulling that stuff? Is this a War, or a Chautauqua?' That fixed them. I guess McCarthy had stepped right outside their vocabulary!"

"Great boys, great boys!" chuckled the Colonel. "They were just the same on the Hindenburg Line." He turned to Floyd. "Our idioms there puzzled some of our British friends, Major. But between us we got the goods on old man Hindenburg, I fancy."

"I have heard rumours to that effect, Colonel," replied Floyd. "The coöperation was pretty good, eh?"

"It was great," said the Colonel. "French, British, or American, it did not seem to matter who was in command. We all kept touch, and we all made our objectives. And team-work! Here is a letter I received from an Australian commander under whom we worked for quite a while. He was a busy man, but he found time to write me this."

The Colonel produced a frayed field-despatch from the breast pocket of his tunic, and read:

I desire to take the opportunity of tendering to you, as their immediate commander, my earnest thanks for the assistance and service of the four companies of Infantry

who participated in yesterday's brilliant operations. The dash, gallantry, and efficiency of these American troops left nothing to be desired, and my Australian soldiers speak in the very highest terms in praise of them.

"There is some more," added the Colonel, "but that will be sufficient to show you what that General thought of my boys. The Australians have a pretty high standard of their own, and they don't pin orchids on other people unnecessarily. So we appreciated *this*." He tapped the despatch. "The fact is, we were a band of brothers. The only occasion upon which we indulged in anything like ceremony or company manners was on the Fourteenth of July. (Corresponds to our Fourth.) I went along with a few others to represent the Americans at a swell lunch which was to be given in the Town Hall of Amiens in honor of the occasion. Amiens was under shell-fire at the time — right in view of the enemy, who were up on the high ground back of Villers Brettoneux, not ten miles away. But no one worried. We had our lunch in a cellar — French, British, Australian, and American officers. Some lunch! There were flowers on the table, too. *Flowers!* God knows where they came from. But that's France — just France! They had to have them! Speeches, too, by Senators from Paris. *Speeches*, with German shells bursting in the street outside! They're a great nation!"

"How did the British Tommy and the Doughboy get along?" inquired Floyd.

Colonel Graham's frosty eyes twinkled.

"Each took a little while," he said, "to get the

combination of the other. You see, Major, we Americans consider ourselves the greatest nation on earth; and being Americans, we have to say so. Perhaps you have noticed that?"

"I have," assented Floyd, "and I have lived in America long enough to learn to like hearing you say so. I like the young American's passionate affection for his country and all her institutions, and his fixed determination to boost everything connected with her. The other day I was waiting in a village for an American Staff car which was being sent for me from Chaumont. I found one standing at the corner of the street, so I asked the chauffeur, thinking he might be from headquarters, — 'Where are you from?' And he sat up, and replied, all in one breath, as if I had pressed a button, — 'Sir, I am from Marion, Ohio, the Greatest Steam-Shovel Producing Centre in the World!' — Just like that. That is what I call the right spirit. But I am interrupting you, Colonel."

"You British, on the other hand," resumed the Colonel, "also consider yourselves the greatest nation upon earth, but you do not say so to people, because you take it for granted that they know already!"

"A palpable hit, sir!" conceded Floyd, amid laughter.

"Well," continued the Colonel, "those two points of view required quite a little adjustment, in the first place. Then again, there was a certain amount of 'We-have-come-to-win-this-War-for-you' stuff from our boys, and a certain amount

of 'You-have-been-a-darned-long-while-making-up your-minds-about-it' stuff from yours; and all these little corners had to be rounded off. On top of that there was a lot of very insidious, very clever work by German agencies, to make trouble between them. But you know about that. Then, they suffered from the handicap of a common language. Believe me, it's a darned sight easier to keep on clubby terms with an ally whose language you don't know than an ally whose language you do! But they are wise to one another now. Each has learned to respect and tolerate the other's point of view. Of course they don't *understand* one another; and never will. In that respect they are three thousand miles and several centuries apart. So they tacitly agreed to regard one another as crazy, but likeable — and leave it at that. In my view that is about as far as Anglo-American sentiment will ever get; and I shall be glad and satisfied if we here, who *know*, can maintain it at that standard — and it's a higher standard than would appear at first sight. But I am talking too much. Where was I?"

"You were going to tell us a story about a tank, sir," announced a respectful voice.

"Was I? Well, I might as well, for we can do nothing at this moment but wait. Up north, in September, my outfit were attacking day after day, with an escort of British tanks. The Germans were scared to death of those tanks. They did everything to stop them — brought up field guns to point-blank range; dug deep ditches, sprung land

mines, and everything. The tanks suffered; but they never weakened, and most of them arrived at their objective. Their crews were marvels, and as for the children who commanded them, they were the cunningest little things you ever saw. One day we were detailed to carry a village, lying just back of a wood. We got there in the course of time, rather more easily than I had expected. When our men reached the little market-square, the reason revealed itself, in the form of a British tank, squatting plumb in the centre, having beaten us to it by four minutes. The usual infant was in charge, sitting on the top and twirling the place where he hoped one day to raise a mustache. When he saw our senior Major doubling down the street at the head of our men, he scrambled down and saluted very smart and proper, and said: 'Major, I hereby hand over this village to you, as my superior officer, with cordial compliments, world without end, Amen!' — or words to that effect. The Major saluted back, very polite, and thanked him. Then the child said, kind of thoughtfully, jerking his head towards the grinning Tommies who were peeking out of the inside of the machine: 'Still, we wish somehow, don't you know, that we had something to show — just to show, sir, that we were here first.' The Major thought a minute. Then he said, 'I can fix that for you. I'll give you a receipt for the village.' And he did!" concluded the Colonel, amid a rising tide of laughter: "*Received from officer commanding British Tank, 'Bing Boy,' one village — in poor condition.*"

A salvo of German five-point-nine shells detonated amid the tree-roots far above their heads.

"Enemy getting nervous," commented the Colonel. "Let him wait! Our artillery preparation is n't due for an hour or more. Now, do you boys understand your orders? Any questions to ask? If so, shoot! That's what I'm here for."

He answered one or two eleventh-hour inquiries, and added: "Make the most of this attack. You may not have another opportunity."

"You mean," suggested Floyd, "that this battle is going to peter out?"

"I mean," replied Colonel Graham deliberately, "that this war is going to peter out! And," he added, with sudden concentrated bitterness, "if it does — *now* — we Americans are going to regret it for the rest of our history!"

The figures round the table sat up — quite literally. But one or two of the older men nodded their heads.

"If only we could be allowed to go on for another three months!" pursued the Colonel earnestly. "If only this great beautiful machine of an American Army could be given a chance to climb to its top speed! Then we should be functioning in proper shape — with our own guns, and our own tanks, plenty of horse-transport, and sufficient airplanes to direct our own fire and locate the enemy's. We should be employing acquired experience instead of borrowed experience. We should have a trained Staff. We could send these great-hearted boys of ours into action adequately protected by a per-

fectly timed barrage. We could cut down our casualties seventy-five per cent, and make future victories a real matter for rejoicing. Of course it won't matter to the folks at home. They have no opportunity to discriminate. They would cheer themselves hoarse over us if we were a Sanitary Section from the Base. But — we should like to show our friends over here what the American Army really is and not merely what it is going to be. And — we could extract some sort of adequate interest from the capital — the capital of our men's lives — that we have been sinking in this year's campaign. But there is n't time! There is n't time!" The old soldier's gnarled fist dropped despairingly upon the trestle table. "We are still on our second speed, and however hard we may step on the gas, we can't get real results for a little while to come. There is n't time!"

There was a pause, while another salvo burst overhead. Then Jim Nichols asked: —

"Colonel, just why are you so sure? Is Peace really on the way?"

(Certainly, the question was worth asking. Within the past five days the following rumours have reached us, *seriatim*, supported by every variety of unreliable testimony: —

(1) Austria is trying to quit.

(2) The German Fleet has come out and surrendered.

(3) Kiel is in the hands of mutineers.

(4) The Kaiser and the Crown Prince have abdicated.

(5) Germany has asked for Peace, and Foch has given her seventy-two hours to accept his terms.)

"Not peace," replied the Colonel, "nor anything like it. But an armistice may come any day. From all accounts the Hun is willing to submit to almost any terms so long as he can get out now, while the going is any good at all. That looks as if his military discipline were growing shaky — or else his civilian morale. Perhaps both. Anyway, he seems suspiciously anxious to quit. The real question is, What are *we* going to do about it?"

"I fancy we are going to accede to his request," said Floyd. "In all probability, if we hammered him for another six weeks or so, we should have him in such a state that only a vacuum-cleaner could clear up the mess. We should probably take a million prisoners. We could sit down upon the Boche's prostrate carcass and dictate any terms we pleased. But — but — but — well, there *might* be a miscarriage. We might find ourselves committed to another year's campaigning. Labour, so-called, is getting fed up, and, though we are driving the Huns before us like sheep, an avoidable casualty-list might produce a crisis in that quarter. As you say, Colonel, the big American machine is running more smoothly and powerfully every day; but France and Britain are down to a pretty fine edge now."

"But your men and the French are all veterans, Major," exclaimed Jim Nichols: "the finest material —"

"That is just the trouble," said Floyd, shaking

his head. "In this crazy war veterans are no use. To-day experience simply means loss of nerve. The most effective — the only effective — troops in this kind of warfare are young, green, ignorant recruits, and the British and French have precious few of that type left. They all know too much now! Moreover, the people at home are suffering badly. They have not too much to eat, and the casualty-list is approaching the three-million mark. They are not kicking: they are prepared to go on for another twenty years if national security demands it: but it is the sacrifice of the last few lives in a war at which national conscience boggles, and I fancy that if our statesmen see a chance of a victorious peace they will grab it."

"I am afraid you are right, Major," sighed the Colonel. "Looks as if we were going to weaken on the proposition of the knock-out blow. If we do, two things are going to happen. First, hundreds and thousands of American boys over at home are going to break their hearts. Think of it! Months and months of hard training and feverish anticipation in those big dreary camps. Then — on their top note of anticipation — Peace! Demobilization! Reaction! Instead of soldiers — and remember the title 'soldier' is the proudest in the world! — with a record of duty done and victory achieved, we shall have created a few million disgruntled, unemployed, unemployable might-have-beens — robbed, *robbed*, of their fair share in the greatest Adventure that life can offer!"

"Still," rejoined Floyd, "you can honestly tell

them this: When the credit for the victories of this summer comes to be apportioned, a big share must go to troops which have never set foot in France — which have never even had the chance to leave America: because it was the promise of their presence that enabled Foch to take the offensive right away — to take chances, in fact, which would have been utterly impossible if he had not known that he had the whole trained manhood of America behind him. So their labour was not altogether in vain, you see!"

But the old war-horse refused to be comforted.

"We *ought* to go on, Major," he said doggedly. "That brings me to the other thing I said was going to happen. America, as a whole, has not yet felt this War: and she *must*, if she is to extract from it the benefit that belongs to her by right. What are a quarter of a million casualties to a nation the size of ours? We *ought* to suffer some more, if only to save us from unreadiness and mismanagement in the future. If we stop now, all that we shall have won will be the opportunity — and you know how our orators and patriotism-mongers will use it — to announce that America just stepped in, and the War was won! It may be true; it may not; but that line of talk never did any good to any nation. We here round this table all know that, and there are thousands of folk at home who know it too. Yes, we ought to get deeper in. God knows, no one wants to make widows and orphans. But a war, however bloody, which teaches a nation its own weaknesses, is worth while. Individuals suffer, as individuals

must and do; but the commonwealth gains. It is true we are losing good Americans by the hundred to-day; but we are making thousands more. Listen. A few weeks ago I was in a Field Dressing-Station, talking to the wounded. One man replied to my enquiries in a strong foreign accent. He was a splendid-looking boy — a Dane, I guess. I asked him: 'What nationality are you?' He looked just the least bit surprised, and replied: 'American, sure!' I said: 'I can see that, son: but tell me, what *made* you an American?' And he laid his hand on a great whale of a wound in his side, and he said, quite simply: '*That* made me an American!' And that is what this War is doing for our big, beloved, half-grown country — making Americans! And now we've got to quit!"

"Still," smiled Floyd, "you have made a good many. You have a couple of million of them over here now, and they will form a very useful leaven when they get home again. He is a great man, your Doughboy, Colonel. I have been privileged to make his acquaintance, and I have seen him fight: and I take off my tin hat to him, because I know what his difficulties have been. When he gets home he will no doubt be smothered in praise — by people incapable of discriminating between the easy and the difficult things that he did. But he will deserve all that he gets, and more, on account of the difficulties he overcame which people at home know nothing about — the things that never get into the papers."

There was a sympathetic murmur from the company. The Colonel nodded.

"You are right, Major," he said cheerfully. "Meanwhile, I wish to report that I feel much better. I needed that outburst badly. Moreover, I don't say that I have any particular *personal* objection to a spell of Peace. I guess we can all do with a vacation. How will you celebrate your first day, Major?"

"I don't know," replied Floyd thoughtfully. "The idea of Peace does not particularly appeal to me in my present frame of mind. More than three quarters of a million of my fellow-countrymen have been killed during the past four years — most of them in their early twenties — and at my time of life I feel almost ashamed to be alive. And the idea of 'settling down' does not altogether attract me, either. As you very rightly observe, Colonel, the community may benefit by a good searching war, but, by God! individuals suffer. Especially if they happen to be of that misguided type which hastens to get into the scrap first, while wiser persons are deciding whether to volunteer or be fetched. That was when I lost my friends — in nineteen-fourteen and fifteen. That stratum of our community has almost ceased to exist. My own Battalion has been replaced — which means wiped out — thirteen times in four years, and I, even I, only am left. So I view the prospect of settling down with mixed feelings. Tell us how *you* propose to spend the first day of the Armistice, Colonel — when it comes!"

"I?" said the Colonel. "I shall start by sending a cable to the best little woman in America, in a

little town in Tennessee that you never heard of, Major; telling her that I have come through, and that she and the bunch of marauders that belong to both of us — we have two boys and two girls — can quit worrying. Then I shall sit down and amplify my sentiments in a letter. But I am old and sentimental. What will you do, Jim Nichols?"

"I guess I'll muster the Battalion," replied the newly promoted and zealous second in command, "and have them clean up their rifles and equipment. They're in a terrible mess, after the time we've been having."

"Well, well! We'll try some one less wedded to his duty!" laughed the Colonel. "What will *you* do, boy?" He turned to the youthful aviator.

Master Harvey Blane meditated. He had twice been wounded, once brought down in flames, and several times driven down out of control.

"I guess," he said at last, "I shall go along down to the airdrome, and order out my machine, and have the boys tune her up very carefully. Then I shall have her wheeled out, and I shall climb on board and test all the contacts. Then I shall run the engine for a spell, and maybe take a turn around the airdrome, along the ground. Then I shall load up with bombs. Then I shall look up in the sky, and say: 'Boys, I don't think after all I feel like going out to-day. Run her back and put her to bed!'"

There was appreciative laughter at this, and Floyd said:

"That reminds me of an English subaltern of my

acquaintance who came home for a week's leave after four continuous months in the Salient, in nineteen-fifteen — and after that experience one required a little leave! He took a room at the Savoy and left certain explicit instructions with the night clerk about the time he was to be called. In due course, at three o'clock in the morning, the telephone beside his bed rang, and our friend sat up and answered it. The voice of the clerk said: 'Colonel's compliments, sir, and he wants you in the firing-trench immediately.' And the child replied: 'Give *my* compliments to the Colonel, and request him to go to Hell!' Then he rolled over and slept till the afternoon. His real leave had begun! He was an artist like yourself, Blane!"

As Floyd concluded this highly probable anecdote, in his usual sepulchral tone, a signal orderly came down the steps that led to the regions above, and handed a despatch to the Adjutant.

Colonel Graham glanced affectionately around the table.

"I hope you boys will all be in a position soon to send *me* such a message!" he said. "But only for a week or two, mind! Leave, not Demobilization. We have n't finished the War yet."

The Adjutant handed him the despatch. Colonel Graham adjusted his glasses, read it, and looked up.

"Yes, we have," he said. "The rumours were true. German delegates are to meet Allied delegates at five o'clock this morning, when the Allied terms will be dictated. *Dictated,* not discussed!"

He glanced at his wrist-watch. "They are being dictated at this moment. Boys, we are through! For better or worse, we are through with this War! Countermand the attack."

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

GALLIA VICTRIX

Lastly, two friends of ours in Paris.

This is an unsatisfactory world, and our destinies are not always controlled as we could wish. But occasionally — just once or twice, maybe, in a lifetime — something happens (or is arranged for us) which so utterly transcends our own dreams and deserts as to restore our faith in an All-Wise and All-Benevolent Providence once and for all.

Frances Lane had been transferred to a military hospital in Paris. Here she discharged, cheerfully and efficiently, those minor and unheroic duties which the professional healer is accustomed to depute to the amateur.

One morning, during the last week in October, she was called upon in the ordinary course of business to sit by the bedside of a young officer who had just been wheeled from the operating-room, until such time as he should "come out of the ether." And the young officer was Boone Cruttenden. Hence the foregoing appreciative reference to the workings of Providence.

Boone duly emerged from one form of oblivion to enter upon another, hardly less complete. In the first, he had been oblivious to everything. In the second, he was oblivious to everything and everybody save Frances. The malady proved

catching, and both patients imagined, as usual, that their symptoms were undetected by the outside world. So the War had to take care of itself for a while.

At the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month of the year nineteen-eighteen these twain found themselves wandering side by side — with Frances on the right, ferociously interposing her slim person between Boone's strapped and bandaged arm and the rest of humanity — through the congested Boulevards; waiting, waiting, like every one else, for Something Official to be announced.

During the previous day *tout Paris*, in Sabbath attire, had roamed restlessly, silently, expectantly, about the streets. Night had fallen, and the throng had not abated. The great city was as murky as ever. Peace might be hovering in the air, but War precautions still prevailed on earth. Small, ghostly, electric lights, encased in dark-blue glass, still indicated rather than illuminated the wayfarer's path. At intervals a discreet, faintly luminous sign, bearing the legend *Abri*, proffered a refuge from the terror that flies by night. Through this gross darkness, silently, furtively, the great concourse drifted and groped. Only over La Place de la Concorde, like the promise of victorious Dawn, the sky was bright with the lights newly unveiled to illuminate the great array of trophies — German guns, German aeroplanes, festoons of German helmets — set up for the advancement of the latest War Loan

— "The Loan of the Last Quarter of an Hour," as the posters happily described it.

On Monday morning the crowd was still there. It had contrived to slip home and put on its working-clothes, but that was all. The shops were open, but no one appeared to be buying anything. There was little sound. Occasionally the most unlikely-looking persons were accosted and asked, "*On a signé?*" But it did not matter, as no one ever stayed for an answer. Paris was waiting.

Then in a moment, about the stroke of eleven, the electric discharge came. Cries arose from various parts of the city. The newspaper offices and information bureaux broke into simultaneous, preconcerted animation.

In the Boulevard des Italiens, Boone and Frances, standing amid a vast throng facing the office of *Le Matin*, suddenly became aware, between two intervals of whispered confidences, that the huge map of the Western Front which covered the outer wall of the building, upon whose surface, through months of alternate agony and triumph, the ebb and flow of battle had been recorded by an undulating array of tiny flags, was being obliterated by a series of great printed slips, set one above another. The first of these had already been put in position. It said:

L'ARMISTICE EST SIGNÉE!

There came a buzz of excitement from the crowd, but little noise. The second slip was going up: —

LA GUERRE EST GAGNÉE!

"*A-a-a-ah!*" Here was a new thought. "We have won — *won!* We have beaten him — beaten the Boche! *Enfin!*" Men and women began to grip one another's hands. The confused, uncertain buzzing rose higher, and the third slip went up: —

VIVE LA FRANCE!

That settled it. Next moment every hat was in the air. *This* was what everybody had been waiting for. Every French man, woman, and child was shouting, or crying, or embracing his neighbour. France! France! France — safe, free, victorious! France!

The last strip was unrolled: —

VIVENT LES ALLIÉS!

This time it was a different demonstration. Mingled with it were the enthusiastic cheers of the Parisian — the glowing, grateful tribute of the principal sufferer to the friends from all over the globe who had stood by her so stoutly. But in the main it was a deep, full-throated, Anglo-Saxon roar. In that crowd stood scores of British and hundreds of American soldiers. Higher and higher rose the cheering. They were not blind cheers. They were cheers of realization. A job of work well and truly completed! No more trenches! No more mud! No more Hell! No more death! Victory! Peace! Home! Sweethearts and Wives!

It was at this point, for the first time, that Boone Cruttenden kissed Frances Lane.

Thereafter, a brief period of uncertainty; then Paris settled down to rejoice in earnest.

It is not easy to rejoice suddenly — after four and a half years of stoical endurance. Still, by noon, Paris had settled down into her stride. The *midinettes* and *ouvrières* had come out for their dinner-hour, and none manifested any intention of returning to their labours. In the balconies outside the great millinery shops of the Rue de la Paix lovely creatures in kimonos, of the *mannequin* tribe, forgetful of the whole duty of a *mannequin*, which is to languish and glide, were hanging far out over the seething street, waving, weeping, and screaming like common persons.

The city had broken out into flags. Every window sported one. Every person carried one. None of your miniature, buttonhole affairs; but a good, flapping tricolour, or Union Jack, or Stars and Stripes, three feet square, carried over the shoulder on a pole six feet long.

Every one felt it incumbent upon him to show some slight civility to his neighbour. Soldiers saluted civilians; civilians embraced soldiers. Young military gentlemen kissed young ladies of the dressmaking persuasion. Exuberant daughters of Gaul joined hands and danced in a ring round embarrassed Anglo-Saxon officers, or tweaked the tails of the Glengarry bonnets of passing "Jocks." At each *porte-cochère* snuffy concierges were phlegmatically tearing down the printed signs tacked upon the outer doors — *Abri, 25 places* — with an almost genial, "*Et voilà!*" A spirit of brotherly love

prevailed: Boone and Frances saw a Paris taxi-driver distinctly slow down to avoid running over two young ladies whose cavaliers were playfully endeavouring to push them under his front wheels.

Presently an aged man in a blue blouse and a species of yachting-cap accosted them.

"*Américain?*" he demanded.

"*Oui,*" admitted Boone cautiously. He had already stalled off more than one would-be kisser.

"*Blessé!*" added Frances proudly.

The old gentleman shook hands with both of them, several times. Tears were running down his cheeks.

"*Et maintenant,*" he told them, "*mon fils reviendra!*"

And he hobbled off, to spread the great news elsewhere.

By the afternoon Paris had resolved itself into processions, mainly of soldiers and girls intertwined. Nearly everybody was singing. The French sang the *Marseillaise,* or *Madelon.* The English-speaking races devoted their energy, which was considerable, to a ditty with the mysterious refrain —

Would you rather be a Colonel, with an eagle on your shoulder,
Or a private, with a chicken on your knee?

Ordinary vehicular traffic had almost entirely removed itself from the streets — probably from the instinct of self-preservation; for the few taxis which still survived carried never less than fifteen passengers, mostly on the roof. But huge military

motor-trucks were ubiquitous. They were mainly British and American, but they bore a cargo completely representative of the Franco-Italo-Anglo-American *entente*, from the impromptu jazz-band of some thirty artistes perched upon the canvas roof, to the quartette of Australian soldiers and their lady friends sitting astride the radiator, bob-sleigh fashion, and wearing one another's hats. It is needless to add that small French boys adhered like flies to all the less accessible parts of the vehicle.

As evening approached, and the electric arc-lamps awoke sizzling and sputtering from their enforced sleep of many gloomy months, one question began to exercise the collective faculties of the celebrants: —

"Where shall we go to-night?"

In most cases the answer was simple enough. At moments of intense mental exaltation the Anglo-Saxon in Paris turns to the Folies Bergères as simply and spontaneously as your true Moslem turns towards Mecca at the call of the muezzin. But Boone and Frances cared for none of these things.

"Listen, dear," said Boone. "Let's go to some place that's *quiet*, where we can get by ourselves!"

"That will be too lovely," agreed the other optimist, as she struggled panting through the press. "But *where*, darling?"

"Well, anyway, some place where we won't meet any one we know," said Boone, with the first instinct of the newly affianced; and Frances concurred.

After dinner, at a restaurant whose proprietor had exuberantly decided to celebrate the cessation of hostilities by trebling prices all round — a dinner at which purely private and domestic plans were raptly discussed amid an atmosphere of riotous publicity — they went to a *revue*.

It was not the usual French wartime *revue* for Anglo-Saxon consumption — with syncopated melodies and Cockney chorus-girls, imperfectly disguised as Parisiennes. It was a *revue intime*, intended for Paris alone, and was full of delicate fancies, and esoteric jokes, and mysterious topical allusions. Boone and Frances understood possibly one third of the dialogue and one in a hundred of the allusions. But they enjoyed the *revue* exceedingly. In their present frame of mind they would have enjoyed a Greenwich Village mystery-play, or *Hamlet* without cuts.

The audience was almost exclusively Parisian — officers in uniform; fair women wearing their jewels for the first time in months; stout, bald, bearded citizens of the bourgeoisie; here and there a British uniform. But so far as our own particular pair of truants could see, they were the only Americans present.

From the boulevard outside came the muffled tramp of feet; shouts of triumph; coy feminine shrieks; the honking of motor-horns; the clink of cow-bells — all suggestive of New Year's Eve on Broadway. But inside the theatre the *revue* flowed smoothly on. No one on the stage made any allusion to the matter which was bursting all hearts.

Not that there was no tension, both on the stage and in the auditorium. In theatre-land it is an understood thing that upon occasions of public rejoicing the actors and the play take second place, while the audience, for one night only, steps into the spot-light and plays "lead." For instance, at this moment, not many blocks away, upon the stage of the Folies Bergères a self-appointed band of khaki-clad enthusiasts were assisting a hysterical *corps de ballet* in the execution of its duty.

But the *revue intime* pursued its intimate course. The piece was too delicately planned and executed to admit of unauthorized "gags" or inartistic interpolations. The audience, being Parisian, realized this, and waited. A time would come. Meanwhile, they leaned back in their seats, fanned themselves, and laughed at the jokes. But the fans moved very rapidly, and the laughs sounded rather breathless — rather like sobs.

Then, suddenly, unexpectedly, at the end of the second act, came the cracking-point.

The scene was laid in a restaurant. (Not that that mattered; a sewing-circle would have served equally well.) The glittering little company were already gathered upon the stage for the *finale*. They were headed by the leading lady — young, blonde, lovely; a shimmering vision in silver — prepared to burst into song. The orchestra gave her a preliminary chord; she opened her carmine lips. And then, to her entered from the wings, apparently without cue or authorization, the principal comedian, in the rôle of the head waiter of

the restaurant — preposterous weeping whiskers and all.

He walked to the footlights, turned to the audience, and announced, quite simply: —

"*L'Armistice est signée!*"

The thing came with such consummate unexpectedness — the thing they had been expecting all evening — that for a moment no one stirred. Then, with a rush, the audience were on their feet; so were the orchestra. One long-drawn, triumphant electrifying chord sprang — apparently of its own volition — from their instruments, and a tremor ran through the theatre. The girl in silver stepped forward, and broke into the *Marseillaise*, with tears raining down her face. . . .

"Name of a name of a name!" An old French colonel, standing beside Boone, was muttering brokenly to himself. Boone could see his fingernails whiten as he grasped the back of the seat in front of him. Boone contented himself with Frances's hand, and together they gazed up at the singer. There she stood — slender, radiant, beautiful, with not too much on, shedding abundant, genuine tears over an artificial complexion. She *was* Paris — Paris personified — Paris unclothed and in her right mind — Paris come to her own again.

The curtain fell — rose — fell — rose — while the storm of cheers raged. About the tenth time it rose again, to stay. The girl had both her hands pressed to her face, and her body was shaking. But another chord from the orchestra — the same

chord — steadied her. She dropped her hands by her sides, uplifted her limpid voice, and sang the *Marseillaise* once more.

But this time her *entourage* had increased. Upon the outskirts of the stage — sidling in from the wings, peeping round the proscenium, mingling bodily with the glittering, shimmering company — there appeared another throng. Scene-shifters; dressers; lusty firemen; brown-faced *poilus;* gendarmes; mysterious individuals in decayed dress-suits; little boys and girls, indicative of the fact that even *revue* artists contract domestic ties — they all edged on, and sang the *Marseillaise* too. If the girl in the centre was Paris, this shining, grimy, patient, cheerful, wistful, triumphant throng around her was France. France — with the black shadow of forty years rolled away from her horizon! France — the much-enduring, the all-surviving, the indomitable; with her beloved capital inviolate still, and her lost provinces coming back to her! *Gallia Victrix.* No wonder they sang. *La Guerre est gagnée* — at last!

There let us leave them all — on the crest of the wave. *La Guerre est gagnée.* God send that we tackle *La Paix* as successfully!

THE END

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